THE GOSPEL BEFORE THE GOSPELS

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE authors and titles that appear in the following pages necessarily represent a somewhat arbitrary selection, but I hope that the list will be adequate for the main history of recent Gospel criticism. The exclusion of important conservative authors, such as Doctor von Zahn, or of the propounders of the more individualistic theories, such as Doctor Spitta, contains of course no reflection on the value of their contributions. And the same is equally true as regards the writers of articles in periodicals, New Testament *Introductions* and "lives of Christ," only a few of which could be mentioned.

* * *

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THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

IN the opening year of the present century there appeared three books on the Synoptic Gospels, of which two represented the finest work of the older school, while the third was the first manifesto of the new. They were, respectively, the ninth edition of the commentary on Mark and Luke in the "Meyer" series, by Bernard Weiss, the third edition of *The Synoptists*, by Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, and *The Messianic Secret in the Gospels*, by William Wrede.

The career of Weiss, who was born as long ago as 1827, was practically coextensive with the rise and development of New Testament scholarship; he was a student in Königsberg when F. C. Baur published his *Paul*. Although individualistic in certain regards and highly tenacious of his opinions, his learning, insight, and sincerity made him the leader of enlightened conservatism throughout well-nigh the entire New Testament world. And in liberal circles Holtzmann, who was five years Weiss's junior, held a similar rank; his erudition was perhaps not so massive, but he was better gifted with imagination and more receptive of new impressions.

During their lifetime these two scholars looked on each other more or less as friendly enemies and were perpetually engaged in writing refutations of each other's opinions. But when to-day we review their work on the Synoptists they do not appear so far apart after all. They both accepted the priority of the second Gospel; in fact it was Holtzmann's *The Synoptic Gospels* written in 1863 that was most influential in establishing this basic fact of Synoptic study.[1] And they both agreed that this Gospel is a trustworthy historical document, in the sense that not only Mark's general plan but, on the whole, his order of the separate sections is a reliable outline of Jesus' ministry. This theory is the "Markan hypothesis."[2] And it is well represented in English by Allan Menzies's *The Earliest Gospel*, likewise published in 1901.

Both Weiss and Holtzmann agreed, moreover, that in addition to Mark the first and third Evangelists used a second source of even higher authority, whose origin was literally apostolic. As to the extent of this source, however, they were at variance. To Weiss it was a lengthy document, which contained many Markan passages and many that are peculiar to Matthew, while to Holtzmann it had about the limits fixed by the usual mechanical rules for reconstructing

[1] Although at this time Holtzmann held a "primitive Mark" theory.

[2] A generation ago, however, this phrase might mean only the priority of Mark.

"Q."[1] As regards the special material in Luke the two scholars differed still more widely. Here, apart from Luke's own pragmatic revisions of earlier material, Holtzmann found only oral traditions of varying worth.[2] Weiss, on the other hand, claimed that he could detect in Luke an important earlier written source which he called "L," and he held that Luke's revisions of all his sources were conservative.

It is surprising how thoroughly these two specialists covered the field of literary criticism, for subsequent research along purely literary lines has added but little to their findings. It is, to be sure, generally admitted that Holtzmann was more nearly right about the dimensions of the second source, while the views of Weiss on the structure of Luke are, by and large, increasingly accepted. But between them they may be said to have solved the documentary side of the Synoptic problem; students who have departed much from the Weiss-Holtzmann literary conclusions have uniformly failed to secure a following, and most nineteenth-century theories of the Synoptic relations are now but a memory. So here, if anywhere, we can be assured that we are on firm ground. In matters of detail subsequent workers are already adding to our knowledge, but, we may safely believe, there can be

[1] The passages which agree closely in Luke and Matthew but which have no parallel in Mark.

[2] Holtzmann argued also for a certain use of Matthew by Luke.

no radical upsetting of the "two-document" hypothesis as a whole.

In their deductions from historical—as distinct from literary—criticism the divergence between the scholars was greater, thanks chiefly to their difference in theological outlook: Weiss accepted miracles in principle and Holtzmann did not. But this was the main distinction. Holtzmann, indeed, never wrote a life of Christ, but his views were well presented by his relative Oskar Holtzmann, who—also in 1901—published such a biography. Weiss, of course, was the author of a very well-known work, first issued in 1882 and passing through many editions, including a popular revision toward the end of his long life. But, as far as the treatment of the Synoptic evidence is concerned,[1] Weiss and O. Holtzmann are not radically different, both basing their accounts principally on Mark.

Now as to Wrede. Born in 1859, he began to teach in 1891 and only four years later was made full professor at Breslau, a position that he filled brilliantly until his premature death in 1906. One of his chief intellectual characteristics was an extreme impatience with the authority of academic tradition; according to his friends, to remark in his presence that a fact was established beyond any shadow of doubt was apt to cause him to publish a monograph maintaining the opposite opinion. And scholars had been

[1] Weiss also used Johannine material rather freely.

saying for decades that Mark's Gospel gives us a thoroughly reliable outline of the ministry of Jesus. Hence, perhaps, his book.

Its conclusions are nowadays familiar enough. Mark is in no sense a "history" of Jesus' ministry. The Gospel contains good traditions, assuredly, but for the most part only of isolated events. The framework into which Mark has fitted these traditions is his own formation, and is dominated by a theological theory. According to Mark, Jesus, even when on earth, was a supernatural being, recognized as such by other supernatural beings—the demons—although his nature was unknown to men. And the blindness of the latter is a persistent theme throughout the second Gospel. Demons hailed Jesus as Son of God with a loud voice and in the hearing of many, but the auditors either never noticed the words or forgot them immediately. Jesus revealed the spiritual nature of his Messiahship, his passion and resurrection in the most explicit terms to his disciples, but they understood nothing. In such a representation of history all talk of sequence and psychological motive is idle, for Mark's Jews and disciples are not human beings at all; they are mere lay-figures. And so Wrede drew this radical conclusion: Mark's supernaturalism has been imposed bodily on a tradition to which it is foreign; Jesus never held himself to be Messiah at all.

This thesis was argued so competently and

was based on observations so penetrating that the book can still be studied with profit. But at the same time—as was inevitable in a pioneer work—there were many exaggerations, many crudities, and not a little that was actually perverse. Hence the first reaction of the scholarly world was far from appreciative, even so wise and generous a critic as Sanday calling it "not only very wrong but also distinctly wrong-headed," and adding: "So far as I knew, Wrede's reconstruction of the Gospel history is accepted by no one."[1] All this might be literally true—and yet Wrede had asked new questions that urgently demanded an answer.

But there were also other questions which he had not raised. He had pointed out that the tradition behind Mark was of two kinds. There were the versions of the acts and sayings of Jesus which Wrede accepted as genuine; how had these reached Mark? And there were also the traditions of the Messiahship. Wrede denied categorically that these could have been invented by Mark, and he suggested that they first originated in connection with the resurrection experiences. But, again, how had these reached Mark? And how were the two strands related? Had they not been interwoven in pre-Markan days? If so, how?

The first scholar to take up the challenge was Johannes Weiss, son of Bernard Weiss and

[1] *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, pages 70, 76.

a full inheritor of his genius. Born in 1863, he made two important contributions to New Testament research before he reached the age of thirty; in 1892 publishing the eighth edition of *Luke* in the "Meyer" series and also an important brochure *Jesus' Preaching of the Kingdom of God;* the latter foreshadowed the extreme eschatological movement of over a decade later. His writings for the next few years were not concerned with Synoptic questions, but in 1903 appeared *The Oldest Gospel,* a book written in explicit critique of Wrede.[1] But, where Wrede had dealt in a somewhat impressionistic manner with generalities, Weiss undertook a minute examination of details. Every paragraph in the Gospels was studied separately in order to distinguish between the pre-Markan traditions and Mark's own revisions. And on the basis of the cumulative results of his studies Weiss was able to deduce in a scientific way the nature and extent of Mark's special theories. At the same time —and this is for our purposes the important point—he undertook an analysis and classification of the earlier material which Mark had inherited.

Weiss found five main groups. Most important was the tradition derived from Peter, to which he referred the passion story as a whole and about two hundred verses from other parts

[1] Its subtitle and Wrede's were identical: *A Contribution towards Understanding the Gospel of Mark.*

of the Gospel. Peter, he thought, was accustomed to relate these stories in something like a dozen groups, which might contain some rough chronological sequence. So the events in Mk. 1:21–39 actually happened within a space of twenty-four hours, while in the complicated section 6:30–8:26 a substratum can be picked out that is topographically self-consistent. Secondly, a small group of our sections Weiss called "controversial and pedagogic dialogues," which were formed in the earliest church by disciples who wished to record Jesus' attitude toward the chief Jewish parties—with more than a side-glance at the proper Christian attitude toward the same parties. Thirdly, another group of four sections that are strongly reminiscent of Q. Fourthly, sayings of Jesus, with or without explanatory narrative; nearly all of these Weiss referred to Q directly. And, finally, Weiss isolated a few sections which he held to have a secondary and more or less legendary origin.

Two things are to be noted about this classification. Weiss endeavored to gain a concrete understanding of the relation of the pre-Markan tradition to the teaching needs of the church. And throughout he was convinced that a historic basis could be found behind the narrative in almost every section in Mark. On this last point Weiss was very positive. Mark, he concluded, had edited—sometimes rather freely—his material for his own purposes, but this material itself commands our respect. In particular, the

testimony to Jesus' Messianic consciousness belongs to the earliest and most authentic tradition; all the difficulties that Wrede detected are due to Mark's revisions and combinations.

Almost simultaneously with the book just described appeared *The Gospel of Mark*, by Julius Wellhausen—probably the most distinguished Old Testament scholar of the nineteenth century—and it was followed rapidly by commentaries on Matthew and Luke, and these were followed by a general *Introduction*. Wellhausen's method was, in all essentials, an application of his Pentateuchal theory to the evangelic tradition; just as the legislative sources D and P are later than the historical J and E, so in Gospel work we must think of Q as later than Mark. And so he became the advocate of a special and extreme form of the Markan hypothesis, which denied practically any historic value to the non-Markan tradition. Q, which almost all scholars thus far had treated with extreme reverence, he roundly declared to be of ecclesiastical origin. Even the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer were discarded; the Sermon on the Mount as "community legislation" and the Lord's Prayer as a "community prayer." And Mark itself he did not regard as free from "community" interests; the passage 8:27–10:45 he held to be an exhortation to "the imitation of Christ," only comprehensible if written after Jesus' death.

The strength of Wellhausen's criticism lay in

his ability to read large sections of the Synoptic narrative in the sense they must have borne to Christians of the apostolic age; here he taught subsequent investigators an important lesson. His weakness was his unwillingness to admit that such passages could have had any other significance; if a section could be understood as ministering to ecclesiastical interests, he invariably assumed that it must have been formed under ecclesiastical influence. So he was brought to the conclusion that the teaching of Jesus was of a very fragmentary and desultory character, that it was Jesus' personality rather than his instructions that impressed the disciples. And this led Wellhausen to a further and startling conclusion. This Jesus, who himself gave so little teaching, was none the less able to found a community that could strip off all the unworthy elements in Judaism, that for its own moral guidance could create the entire contents of the Sermon on the Mount and all the rest of Q. Here we have a rehabilitation of the spiritual leadership of the Jerusalem church—and with a vengeance! It is almost needless to say that in this last regard Wellhausen has found no true successor.

But Wellhausen advanced another theory which to-day has no lack of adherents. It can be illustrated by his treatment of, *e. g.*, the Gerasene demoniac story. In this section Johannes Weiss, following a familiar "liberal" tradition,

was content to see a slight elaboration of a perfectly historic event; the swine were, as a matter of fact, frightened by the outcries or gestures of the sufferer, and so took to flight. But to Wellhausen such an explanation was the sheerest rationalizing. The story has two main motives, one of which teaches the stupidity of demons and the other the folly of keeping swine; "popular" themes which must have originated in Jewish folk-lore. So the whole section is simply a satiric tale, which somehow or other has become attached to Jesus, just as similar tales are attached to prominent men everywhere. This theory, to be sure, was not novel, but Wellhausen brought it into the main stream of Synoptic theory.

Wellhausen's results were paralleled rather closely in *Jesus*, by Wilhelm Bousset (1904), a colleague of Wellhausen's at Göttingen, whose published work thus far had dealt chiefly with Judaistic thinking and apocalyptics. This book was a manifesto of the more extreme "liberal" school, and, indeed, tended rather too freely to read liberalism back into history. In particular, while Bousset could not yet see his way to accepting Wrede's conclusions as to Jesus' Messianic consciousness, he could see no value in Messianism. And so he maintained that Jesus accepted Messiahship as a mere matter of duty, as a burden rather than an inspiration.

Contemporary (in 1903) with the volume by

Johannes Weiss and the first Wellhausen commentary came Doctor P. W. Schmiedel's article "Gospels" in the second volume of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. About half of this deals with "The Credibility of the Synoptics," and Schmiedel's phrasing of many of the questions is strikingly modern. Especially celebrated is his formula for reaching assured historic ground in the Synoptic tradition: passages that are in plain contrast to the tendency of the tradition cannot have been created by it and are consequently wholly trustworthy, so that we have at least five "foundation pillars" (Mk. 10:17 f., Mt. 12:31 f., Mk. 3:21, Mk. 13:32, and Mk. 15:34). Schmiedel naturally did not mean that these are the only reliable verses—although such a conception of his theory became current and pictured him as the protagonist of a radicalism that he disowned—he was simply citing the most extreme cases. And he was on the right track, even though our present conception of "foundation pillars" is not quite the same.

In 1905 an interesting attempt to solve the Markan problem by pure literary criticism was made by Emil Wendling in his *Primitive Mark*. He distinguished two original sources, one composed of "apothegms" and the other of "wonder stories," which the Evangelist "governed by dogmatic theories" unskilfully combined. Perhaps the most unfortunate part of this theory was the fact that its artificiality obscured the

significance of many of its author's keen observations; Wendling's terminology is just coming into its own.

The next year brought Albert Schweitzer's *From Reimarus to Wrede*. Schweitzer agreed with Wellhausen that Jesus' teaching was incidental and subordinate, but the key to Jesus' significance he found in an apocalypticism of the most "thoroughgoing" sort. In England this theory found immediate support; it was indorsed with little reserve by Sanday[1] and with no reserve at all by George Tyrrell,[2] while a life of Christ explicitly based on Schweitzer's theories was published as recently as the current year[3] (1927). In Germany[4] and America, however, opinion has been decidedly more sceptical, and in any case the chief defects of Schweitzer's method are self-evident. His real contribution to Synoptic research consisted chiefly in his insistence on the importance of eschatology for Synoptic study—something badly in need of emphasis.

A work of high importance that likewise appeared in 1906 was *The Writings of the New*

[1] *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, especially pages 121 ff.

[2] *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, *passim*.

[3] J. Warschauer, *The Historical Life of Christ*. Doctor Warschauer, it should be noted, avoids certain errors that were prominent in Schweitzer.

[4] Since the War, however, under the leadership of Doctor Karl Barth, a school of religious thought has developed in Germany which includes many noted names. The extreme emphasis laid on "other-worldliness" has real and admitted affinities with Schweitzer's apocalypticism.

Testament, a semipopular commentary on the entire New Testament, but of greater value than most so-called "technical" works. The general editor was Johannes Weiss, and he also wrote the Synoptic discussion. He indulged in little direct polemic against Wrede and Wellhausen, and depended rather on a positive statement of the facts as he saw them, but he wrote always with the newer theories in mind.

A more explicit reply to Wellhausen's theory of Q was Harnack's *The Sayings of Jesus* (1907), the only one of this distinguished scholar's "New Testament Contributions" that bear directly on our theme. In the same year Doctor Erich Klostermann published his "Mark" in Lietzmann's *Handbook to the New Testament*. This proved to be chiefly an epitome of current opinion that, so far as it stated conclusions of its own, was fairly faithful to Holtzmann and the Markan hypothesis. In the same year Holtzmann himself issued a final summary of his position in a brochure called *The Messianic Consciousness of Jesus*, which half-whimsically opened with the words, "A reactionary book by an antiquated theologian!" And Bernard Weiss said his own elaborate "last word" in his *The Sources of Luke's Gospel* (1907) and *The Sources of the Synoptic Tradition* (1908). For the next few years German scholarship seemed content to rest and meditate on the prolific questions that had been raised.

In France, however, Doctor Loisy's *The Synoptic Gospels* (1907) was an "event" of the first magnitude. We can see now that it was essentially a transition work; in most regards it simply continued the Holtzmann tradition, with due attention to Wellhausen's conclusions but without much regard for Wrede. Doctor Loisy's own opinions were not always clearly formulated and were sometimes inconsistent, while very individualistic views were often stated dogmatically without adducing appropriate evidence. Consequently Doctor Firmin Nicolardot's *The Editorial Processes of the First Three Evangelists* (1908) was in some regards a more important book. Particularly significant are his study of Mark, whom he aptly characterizes[1] as a "catechist," and his insistence that the Synoptic redaction was simply one step in a process that had been going on ever since the first origin of faith in Jesus; current New Testament study would profit by a renewed examination of Nicolardot.

In English Doctor F. C. Burkitt's *The Gospel History and its Transmission* (1906) supported the Markan hypothesis with brilliant energy. Sanday's *The Life of Christ in Recent Research* (1907) surveyed the whole Synoptic field with its learned author's mellow wisdom, while Archdeacon Allen's *St. Matthew* (also 1907) was a sturdy defense of an unusual point

[1] Page 305.

of view. 1909 saw the publication of two important general summaries. Doctor Montefiore's *The Synoptic Gospels* was frankly written by a non-specialist, and its author followed the sensible plan of giving the opinions of leading commentators in their own words; he confined his own work principally to illuminating the narrative from Jewish sources.[1] The result was a handbook of extraordinary utility, which did much to familiarize English readers with the work of Continental specialists. And the second volume of Canon V. H. Stanton's *The Gospels as Historical Documents*[2] discussed elaborately the literary criticism of the Synoptists.

But it is no discredit to the above very able writers to say that Doctor B. W. Bacon's *The Beginnings of Gospel Story* (likewise 1909) was more full of promise for the future of Synoptic work. The author had thoroughly mastered the Wrede-Wellhausen contentions and had come to feel that the Markan hypothesis was no longer tenable. His analysis of Mark's own contributions to the second Gospel was as thorough as that of Johannes Weiss, and his definition of the Evangelist's theological and apologetic purpose was sharper. And not even Wellhausen succeeded better in explaining the

[1] This does not of course mean that Doctor Montefiore failed to draw his own conclusions.

[2] The other two volumes deal, respectively, with the external evidence and with the fourth Gospel.

Markan sections in their relation to the immediate needs of the church, or in reading the Gospel as an integral part of the history of early Christianity. Yet the book failed at first to exert the influence that it deserved. This is partly due to the compressed style, which makes the severest demands on the reader, but the chief reason was the unfamiliarity of the thesis; to a generation brought up on the Markan hypothesis Doctor Bacon's argument appeared almost perversely bewildering. And so we do not find its contentions mentioned in the stately *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem* of two years later.

To return to Germany. In 1912 Doctor Paul Wendland published *The Primitive Christian Literary Forms*, which packs an extraordinary number of keen comments into the thirty-five pages devoted to the Synoptists. Behind Mark lies a mass of unchronological oral tradition, mostly anonymous, which the Evangelist collected and arranged as he deemed best for practical and devotional purposes. Wendland, however, was impatient with the search for Mark's theological aims, and he went so far as practically to reject for the Gospel and its sources any but the most naïve motives. Our critical eyesight may be so keen that we find theology where none exists; in judging both the pre-Markan tradition and Mark's use of it the the proper standard should be the folk-tale.

In the ensuing year came a very significant volume, Wilhelm Bousset's *Kyrios Christos*. As a whole, to be sure, it deals with other than synoptic problems, but the first three Gospels are treated as thoroughly as is necessary for the main purpose. Bousset had now come over completely to Wrede's standpoint—or had even gone beyond it—and he declined to treat even the sources of the Synoptists as primary evidence for anything but the beliefs of the Palestinian church. In fact, he was so consistent in this conviction as to argue that the silence of these sources is an assured proof of Palestinian ignorance on any matter. *E. g.*, since Jesus is called "Lord" only in certain strata, it follows that this title must have originated in Gentile circles. The Christology of the Palestinian church was a mere Son-of-Man Messianism, which regarded the ascended Jesus as completely separated from his disciples. And so he interpreted Lk. 12: 10, "Every one who shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven," in the following remarkable sense: "Because the Son of Man is so far away, he may be spoken against with relative impunity: but the Spirit is always at hand and will take swift vengeance!"[1] "Method" could scarcely attain a more uncompromising rigidity. And all Mes-

[1] Page 93 2d ed., page 8.

sianic consciousness was now denied to Jesus, and every passage that asserted it was resolutely discarded; Bousset carried this even to the point of making the title on the Cross a Christian creation.[1]

Bousset's faults were not small. He saw early Christian history as a series of water-tight compartments which were connected with one another more or less fortuitously; the church's experience, in his eyes, was uncreative and every new element must be explained as an importation from other religions. This theory—the doctrine of the "religious-historical" school in its most extreme form—continually marred some of Bousset's finest work. But he had an extraordinary gift for handling mass evidence. And his aim was always religious. Despite his continual rejection of Synoptic evidence, the little picture he draws[2] of the historical Jesus has a deep spiritual appeal.

1914 brought war and the consequent cessation of scholarly output: Johannes Weiss's *Primitive Christianity*, the first part of which was published just before (1913) the catastrophe, bears on Synoptic study only indirectly. In 1915 Doctor A. H. M'Neile issued his admirable commentary on Matthew, which summarized the assured results and certain of the more important experiments of criticism. And from the compar-

[1] Page 56, but the passage does not appear in the second edition.
[2] Page 90; 2d ed., page 75.

ative quiet of Switzerland came (1916) Doctor Paul Wernle's *Jesus*, more or less a counterblast to Bousset and a vigorous defense of Jesus' Messianic consciousness. To the extraordinary credit of German scholarship should be set the courage to publish in such a year as 1917 the new (third) edition of Johannes Weiss's *The Writings of the New Testament*. Its editor had died three years earlier,[1] and revision of his work was intrusted to Bousset. Very wisely, however, the latter printed the text of his predecessor practically unchanged, and contented himself with adding short notes whose identity could easily be distinguished. Their character was fully foreshadowed in *Kyrios Christos*, so further description is needless here.

With peace, publication could begin again, and K. L. Schmidt's *The Frame of the Story of Jesus* appeared (1919). The book is explicitly devoted to clarifying matters of detail, and its examination of the Synoptic section is often limited to the opening and closing sentences of a paragraph. Schmidt decided that—apart from the passion narrative—the pre-Synoptic tradition contained simply a number of individual stories; for the most part these were grouped topically, although here and there certain sections were really united by a chronological thread. The original independence of the units was due to a very simple cause, the devotional

[1] August 24, 1914.

needs of the church. At Christian gatherings only short extracts from the tradition could be read or recited, for group attention flags rapidly. Moreover, since each gathering was a complete act of worship in itself, the "lessons" must likewise be complete in themselves, not taxing a congregation to remember what had been said on an earlier occasion, and not leaving a story obviously unfinished. Both Mark and Luke—the former roughly and the latter more systematically—disregarded this principle and endeavored to establish a regular continuity; as a result they have always enjoyed less favor in the church than Matthew, who returned to topical grouping and discarded superfluous framework.

Schmidt's survey of the redactorial processes called attention to the constant tendency to make the stories concrete by inserting names of persons, places, Jewish parties, etc. But he noted very explicitly that such names may be perfectly authentic, and in various instances can be explained on no other hypothesis.

Klostermann completed the first edition of his work on the Synoptists with his *Luke* (also in 1919), which had the same character as his earlier commentaries. Two years later Synoptic students welcomed volume I of the *Origin and Beginnings of Christianity*, by no less eminent an author than the historian Doctor Eduard Meyer, whose extraordinary critical acumen was thus directed to a new field. He found,

however, little in current Synoptic methods that dissatisfied him, and was content on the whole to make suggestions in matters of detail. His most far-reaching theory was that Mark is based chiefly on two extensive documents, which he insisted the Evangelist must have used in a written form; he called them the "Disciples" and the "Twelve Apostles" sources. Professional students of the Synoptists, to be sure, have not yet persuaded themselves that the existence of these documents can be established, but they are fully alive to the value of Doctor Meyer's contributions, and realize that he has made needful a re-examination of various accepted theories. At the same time, while refusing to adopt the Markan hypothesis, Doctor Meyer convinced himself that the bulk of the Synoptic tradition relates events that are genuinely historic; that his opinion should have great weight does not need the saying.

A revised edition (posthumous, unfortunately) of Bousset's *Kyrios Christos* was issued in the same year, and in 1923 Martin Werner published an elaborate critique of the assumed Paulinism of Mark. But consideration of the other post-war German literature must be postponed until the next lecture.

In France the most significant volume carrying on the "regular" tradition has been the first volume (1923) of Doctor Maurice Goguel's *Introduction to the New Testament*, a masterly survey.

Synoptic books in English were scanty for the first post-war years, but 1925 saw the almost simultaneous appearance of three, and all of the first rank. Doctor Bacon's *The Gospel of Mark* developed and reinforced the author's positions as set forth in *The Beginnings of Gospel Story* sixteen years earlier, together with a lavish wealth of supplementary material; the volume is by far the most penetrating introduction to Mark in any language. And what Doctor Bacon did for the introduction, Doctor A. E. J. Rawlinson did for the exposition, in his *St. Mark*. A comparison with this commentary of any of the older English works shows the immense progress that had taken place. The Markan hypothesis is explicitly and resolutely set aside, so that all attention may be concentrated on the separate sections, while the exegesis of the latter takes invariable account of the long period of oral transmission that preceded Mark's work. Finally, Canon B. H. Streeter's *The Four Gospels* gathered together many scattered threads of literary criticism and united them with both the classic English tradition and his own researches. In his treatment of Luke he approximated the position of Bernard Weiss, an interesting fact, since his method of approach was entirely different. His most novel suggestion was his contention that Matthew is based on a third written source M, so turning the "two-document" hypothesis into a

"four-document" hypothesis.[1] This new source is composed, in substance, of the Matthæn material with a Q coloring that has no close parallel in Luke; further investigation is needed, but the source seems likely to vanish into Q itself. Beyond literary criticism Canan Streeter made no attempt to go; as far as the historical problem is concerned he contented himself with pointing out that the multiplication of sources increases the authentication of the events related.

In 1926, curiously enough, attention swung to Luke. My own commentary followed avowedly the lines of the Weiss tradition. Doctor Vincent Taylor's *Behind the Third Gospel* is an elaborate analysis of the literary problems, with results much the same as Streeter's; both he and the latter hold that Q and L were first united to form "Proto-Luke." Then, as it were by an afterthought,[2] Markan material was incorporated, so that the finished third Gospel is only in a subordinate sense dependent on the second. Still another book on Luke came a year later, Doctor H. J. Cadbury's *The Making of Luke-Acts*. Doctor Cadbury's interest is centred more on the Lukan historical methods in general than on detailed study of individual passages, and he studiously refrains from pressing special theses of his own. He means his book to be taken as an introduction to the historical

[1] M and L, in addition to Mark and Q.
[2] Or, indeed, after a considerable lapse of time.

problems in Luke[1] to be read and mastered before beginning critical work, and no better propædeutic can be imagined.

To complete the treatment of every literary aspect of the Synoptic problem only one other book was needed, and the lack was supplied by Mr. J. M. C. Crum's *The Original Jerusalem Gospel*, a fresh investigation of Q. Its contents are sufficiently indicated by its title, but, while in part it follows older lines of treatment, its method also takes into consideration matters to be treated in the next lecture.

And so with 1927 we touch something of a resting-place. There are still endless questions to be asked about the literary structure of the Synoptists, but we can feel that the possible answers must lie within certain definite limits. At the same time we are sensible that we have begun to ask questions that do not belong to literary criticism at all. We are beginning to reach the final data of literary investigation, the separate paragraphs that lie behind our documents and that were transmitted to the first Christian authors by oral means. It is with them that we are next to concern ourselves.

[1] Incidentally, it serves almost equally well for Mark and Matthew.

FORM-CRITICISM

II

FORM-CRITICISM

THE first really determined effort to grapple with the problem of the separate paragraphs was that of Doctor Martin Dibelius, a scholar whose published work thus far had chiefly been devoted to the Epistles.[1] His book—only about a hundred pages long—was issued in 1919 under the title *The Form-History of the Gospel*. And this title demands a word of explanation.

"Form-history" is a compound that is just beginning to be adopted into English. As used by contemporary writers on the New Testament it bears a sense derived from folk-lore terminology; it describes the history of certain preliterary forms not consciously created by individuals but developed by the force of constant oral repetition. If we amass folk-tales and popular traditions in sufficient numbers, we find that we can class them into certain more or less well-defined groups according to their forms; and "form-history" is the study of these groups.

The Synoptic material, obviously, offers a tempting field to the form-historian, for here we undoubtedly have the product of an oral

[1] In 1911, however, he had published an interesting monograph on the Baptist, and in the preface he speaks of his interest in the form of the Synoptic stories.

tradition little controlled by conscious literary art. Long before the method had been definitely christened scholars had endeavored to give the stories some form classification or other; D. F. Strauss's treatment of them as myths was only a very special form-history, while many of the writers named in the last lecture used the method more or less consciously.[1] But with Dibelius form-history is raised to the rank of a distinct discipline, with rules of its own that make it competent to pronounce not only literary but historical judgments; in his hands "form-history" becomes "form-criticism." Consequently a somewhat detailed presentation of his theory is justified.

The first purpose of a form-historian at work on a story is to determine its relation to the life of the community that framed it. And the prologue to Luke's Gospel states in explicit terms the relation of the stories about Jesus to the life of the earliest Christian communities; these stories were to make converts "know the certainty concerning the things wherein they had been instructed." Or, in other words: the Gospel stories have received their form as parts of the earliest Christian preaching.

But we should note two things about Dibelius's conception of this preaching. First, it was primarily *mission* preaching to the uncon-

[1] Fascher (*v. i.* page 59) in his first chapter gives a survey of form-history's antecedents.

verted. And, second, it was the preaching of the *Gentile* mission; the earlier Jewish-Christian message Dibelius believes to be usually unrecoverable. Now to find examples of mission preaching we need only turn to the Book of Acts, which abounds in them; whether these speeches are correctly reported or not is for our purposes immaterial, for Luke certainly would not have incorporated discourses that departed from accepted and familiar models.

In the two addresses to the heathen, to be sure, we find little that is specifically Christian, but the other sermons all exhibit three well-marked divisions: a positive message (*kerygma*), an argument from prophecy, and an exhortation to repentance. And fortunately we are able to study the first of these divisions more in detail. In I Cor. 15:3–7 one of its elements appears separately, a "word" which Paul had "received," and which he transmitted unchanged to his converts: "Whether it be I or they,[1] so we preached and so ye believed." And the content of this "word," the passion and resurrection of Christ, is a constant element in all the sermons in Acts. Again, in Acts 10:37 and 13:24–25 the mighty works of the Baptist appear as an element of the preaching, while in Acts 2:22, 10:38 the mighty works of Christ appear. So, since the story of the Baptist, an ac-

[1] Remembering always that Dibelius limits the "they" to missionaries to the *Gentiles*.

count of Christ's deeds, and a narrative of the passion and resurrection make up precisely the historical portions of our Gospels,[1] Dibelius regards his method as justified; the Gospel stories are to be studied as units employed in mission preaching. One of these units, the passion-and-resurrection story, was necessarily of some length. But this is an exception; the normal unit would be short and succinct, giving for the preachers' use only the essentials in a model form. So to these units Dibelius assigned the grammatical and rhetorical name for "models," namely "paradigms."

Originally these paradigms were independent, so that a preacher might choose any of them for his immediate needs. But our Evangelists have grouped them into continuous stories, and in so doing have introduced editorial notes and other modifications, so that we can rarely find a paradigm in its earliest form; as a matter of fact Dibelius[2] recovers from Mark only seven instances in a relatively pure state. Namely:

2:1–12. Healing of the paralytic.
2:18–22. Fasting.
2:23–28. Plucking grain on the Sabbath.
3:1–6. Sabbath healing.
3:20 f., 31–35. Jesus' relatives.

[1] Christ as the supreme *teacher* appears also in Acts 3:22–23, 7:37, but Dibelius considers the Gospel teaching sections separately.

[2] Page 21.

10:13–16. The children.
12:13–17. The tribute-money.

Each of these sections is complete in itself, for Mark's introductions or conclusions are easily detachable. Each of them is obviously constructed in order to edify. And each of them contains only the strict minimum of detail needed to understand the incident narrated. Christ's interlocutors are never described beyond the briefest mention of their character, and not infrequently they are made to speak in chorus. In the cures there is no dallying over the miracle for its own sake; we are told simply the nature of the ailment, Christ's words, and their effect. Everything is made subordinate to a central saying of Jesus, which is the "kernel" of the paradigm. And this kernel saying invariably possesses universal application; here we see the requirements of the form, for words with only a special application could rarely be used in general preaching. And a usual closing formula such as, "They were all amazed and glorified God," shows the effect the story should produce on the hearers.

Now it is self-evident that a paradigm could be formed only by eliminating needless features, concentrating everything around the kernel saying, and infusing the proper devotional coloring. And naturally each of these steps introduced a conventional element, and involved a greater or less departure from an objective his-

torical record. Moreover, Dibelius thinks that in some instances the "universal" saying may have been added to complete the form, that the composers of the paradigms may have put into Jesus' mouth statements which generalize situations that he treated concretely. But a neutral record of objective fact could have had little interest to the preachers; it is precisely their conventional character that enabled the paradigms to give to the hearers an immediate and vivid picture of Jesus.

Furthermore, when the character of the paradigm formation is understood, stripping off the generalizing saying may suffice to give us a glimpse of a pre-paradigm stage in the tradition. For instance, when Jesus' mother and brethren sought to see him, his gesture toward his disciples with the words, "Behold my mother and my brethren," was enough. But for mission purposes this was too concrete, and so the scene was supplemented with "For whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and my mother"; now no one could miss the sense. On the other hand, elements in a paradigm that are needless for the lesson may confidently be regarded as later additions. Consequently from the external form of a section we may deduce its place in the tradition, and so may deduce its approximate date. This is the fundamental thesis of form-criticism.

The paradigm, however, was not the only

form. According to Dibelius, as Christianity spread in the world it developed new needs, and to fill these the preacher was supplemented by the teacher and the story-teller. Of the teacher we hear much in the New Testament, but he need not concern us just now. Of the story-teller, to be sure, we hear nothing, and yet the existence of story-tellers is proved very simply by the presence in our tradition of admirably told stories. So we may take the "story" as our next specific type. Of these Dibelius finds eight in Mark,[1] with very definite characteristics. They describe Jesus primarily as a miracle-worker, and so—unlike the paradigms—they contain no saying of general application. Vividness of detail, however, is indispensable in such accounts. So unedifying elements may not really be out of place, as when the disciples rebuke Jesus or question his wisdom[2]; such touches—quite without theological motive—are designed only to heighten the action. And these stories usually close with a statement which establishes the truth and the completeness of the miracle. Primarily these stories were told simply for the pleasure they awoke, but the accounts of Jesus' miracles might serve also as models for Christian "healers" in the apostolic age.

[1] 4 : 35–41, 5 : 1–20, 5 : 21–43, 6 : 35–44, 6 : 45–52, 7 : 32–37, 8 : 22–26, 9 : 14–29. In the third of these, two stories are intertwined so closely that they cannot be separated without destroying the form.

[2] Mk. 4 : 38, 5 : 31, 6 : 37, etc.

Stories might enter Christian tradition in various ways. Frequently they are paradigms that have been enlarged, so producing a mixed form, part paradigm and part story, as in Lk. 13:10–17. And the enlargement might actually come from genuine recollection of the original event, although Dibelius does not attach much weight to this possibility. Normally, he thinks, the sources for the new details were drawn from apostolic experience, from the Old Testament, from Greek or Oriental sources, or even from the narrator's fancy. And in extreme instances a non-Christian story might be transferred bodily to Jesus (Wellhausen's hypothesis). Which of these alternatives is true in any given case is usually indeterminate; to reach a decision we should have to know all the original material. But one thing is certain: These stories were not formed for use in Christian worship; they are only partly Christian[1] and they all contain something of the "world."[2] And yet between the most extreme "worldliness" that we find in the Synoptists and the "wild" tradition of the apocryphal Gospels there is a great gulf; the transmitters of the Synoptic material took comparatively slight interest in the marvellous for its own sake.

In Dibelius's opinion Mark was the first writer to unite the separate elements of the his-

[1] Most thoroughly so in Matthew.

[2] It may be noted that to Dibelius the terms "world" and "religion" are in the sharpest possible antithesis.

torical tradition into a continuous narrative; the second Evangelist had before him only an amorphous mass of disconnected paradigms and stories which he wove into a whole; naturally with one eye always on his own theological purpose. But the pre-Markan passion story had approximately its present form, and Mark knew also a collection of sayings, on which he drew as he saw fit.

Now as to these sayings. They had long since been collected to form a "parenesis," or moral code, for the general needs of the earliest Christianity. Every one knows the sudden change of style that takes place when the writers of the Epistles pass from the doctrinal to the practical parts of their works; in place of sustained sentences we have short precepts enunciating general rules. Moreover, whether we find these precepts in Paul, Peter, James, Clement, or Hermas, they are so similar that we are bound to postulate the presence of a general Christian moral tradition behind them all. And here we may think the apostolic "teacher" found his place; he was the guardian of this moral tradition.

Its most precious part was composed of the actual sayings of Jesus. But these did not suffice to solve all concrete problems—Paul says explicitly in one instance[1] that he "has no commandment of the Lord"—and so they were

[1] I Cor. 7 : 25.

supplemented by other ethical material, drawn according to need from Jewish or Greek sources.[1] And we must never forget that the Spirit—and therefore the Lord—was speaking constantly through the Christian prophets. And yet we can prove that there was a distinction.[2] Collections of Jesus' historic words must certainly have existed, one of the best being of course our Q. Not quite, though, as we reconstruct it, for Q's interest is not wholly parenetic; it is concerned to tell not only what the Master *said*, but also who this Master *was*.[3] And so Dibelius distinguishes between a primitive Q, composed of pure parenesis, and a later layer with Christological interests; he even argues that the second stage may be post-Markan and due to Mark's influence.

Among the other forms, we may note especially Dibelius's definition of the "legend": an enlarged paradigm or story where the additions give individuality to other persons than Jesus. Another type—unnamed—arises when a saying is, so to speak, dramatized into an event, as in the dispute about rank (Mk. 9:33–37) or the section on the greatest commandment (12:28–34). Another, a special variety of the story, is the "epiphany," which depicts a supernatural

[1] Dibelius notes (most justly) that the Jews likewise utilized precepts from the Greek moralists. On the whole subject of these moral codes compare especially his commentary on James.

[2] For a fuller discussion see below, page 120 ff.

[3] As in the temptation story, Mt. 11:25–30, etc.

being revealing himself to chosen witnesses while remaining hidden from the public. This, Dibelius thinks, is found in the scenes where Jesus withdraws before working a miracle,[1] in the stories of the miraculous feedings, and (uniquely) in the account of Jesus wishing to pass by his disciples when walking on the water (Mk. 6:48).

And finally the "myth," the narrative of the doings of divine persons that explains some cosmic phenomenon or some observance in a cult. In Christianity myths might arise either by transferring some current mythical story to Jesus or by explaining some Christian doctrine (or act of worship) as depicting an epiphany of the Divine Son; in Paul we find passages that illustrate both types. But Paul was certainly not the creator of the form; the evaluation of the events of Jesus' life in mythical terms may go back to the very eye-witnesses themselves.[2] Among the mythical passages Dibelius classes the baptism and transfiguration stories, and he finds mythical touches elsewhere, particularly in the epiphany passages. Even Q is not free from mythical influence; the combination of self-exaltation and appeal to the people in the Great Thanksgiving (Mt. 11:25–30[3]) is typical of divine or semidivine mediators in Hel-

[1] Mk. 5:37, 7:33, 8:23.

[2] Dibelius, page 85.

[3] Verses 28–30 are to be regarded as part of Q, despite the absence of a Lukan parallel.

lenism. So we have, for instance, in the Corpus Hermeticum 7: "O men, whither are you being swept away? Ye are drunken. Stand firm; turn sober; look upward with the eyes of the heart. Seek a guide to lead you to the door of the House of Knowledge. There you will find the bright light which is pure from darkness; there none is drunken, but all are sober, and they look up and see with the heart."[1] Or we may compare the great missionary commission (Mt. 28:18–20), or the saying about "two or three gathered together" (Mt. 18:20).

But, notes Dibelius, one thing is perfectly certain. The paradigms and the earliest collection of sayings—the parenesis—are wholly free from mythical touches; they depict the words and works of a teacher, not those of a god. So attempts to make a purely mythical figure of Jesus are futile.

Such is Dibelius's very interesting theory. No doubt even to state it is to raise many questions as to its validity, but it assuredly deserves a full and sympathetic exposition.

In the course of his discussion of the "mythical" material he notes the difficulty that besets a sharp distinction between the myth and the folk-story. And the latter form is selected for treatment by our next writer, Doctor Hermann Gunkel, in his *The Folk-story in the Old Test-*

[1] It should be observed, however, that in order to obtain this "form" Dibelius has been obliged to pick out phrases embedded in other material.

ament (1921), a work that deals incidentally with the New Testament as well. One passage will be enough to indicate the treatment, the discussion[1] of Jesus' baptism. Gunkel begins by observing that the Gospels vary as to whether the descent of the Dove was seen only by Jesus or by all who were present. He then decides that the latter alternative represents the original form of the narrative, which is best preserved in the fourth Gospel. But evidence that the Spirit was symbolized by a dove is so vague that we must believe that the dove, not the Spirit, is the authentic element in the account. A bird, by alighting on a man, points him out to the people as their king; this is a perfect folk-lore motive with actual attestation.[2] Hence we must assume that the story must have existed in the days and the locality of the first Christian community, which seized upon it and applied it to Jesus, the true King of Israel. Then the dove was identified with the Spirit, so creating the Christian symbolism. In Mark we have a later development of tradition that has obscured the original meaning, although Gunkel makes no attempt to investigate the causes that were at work in Mark.

Gunkel's treatment was confined to the study of a few passages, but contemporary with his book there came an extraordinarily extensive

[1] Pages 147-151

[2] For data see Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, *Nachrichten*, 1915 ff., especially 1917. None of the evidence, to be sure, proves anything for either Palestine or the first century.

and detailed investigation in Doctor Rudolf Bultmann's *The History of the Synoptic Tradition.* This scholar, like Dibelius, put his main reliance on form-criticism, but he dissented profoundly from Dibelius's methods. The latter, in starting from the missionary practice of the church and arranging the traditions accordingly, made two assumptions: (1) that we know what this practice was, and (2) that the material was really determined by it. But neither assumption can be justified, and so legitimate method demands that we should begin with the material itself.

As Bultmann has published a summary of his book in English, we may confine ourselves here to the main heads of his form classification, without entering into his minuter subdivisions.

In the first place, we have the "apothegms," short, pithy sayings or significant acts, enclosed in a historical setting. These are more or less the same as Dibelius's paradigms,[1] but Bultmann by no means limits their use to mission preaching and still less to Gentile mission preaching. When controversial or pedagogic, their purpose was to justify some point in the belief or practice of the church; Bultmann notes that the controversies sometimes turn not about the acts of Jesus but about those of his disciples.[2] On the other hand, merely biographical apothegms sim-

[1] For the exact relation of the two classes see Fascher, page 196.
[2] Mk. 2 : 18, 24; 7 : 2; cf. 2 : 15, etc.

ply served to keep fresh the memory of the Master. And a study of the form of the apothegms leads to the following conclusions. Apothegms never contained the names of places; therefore all such names are later additions. Apothegms always depict Jesus as being questioned; therefore any scene in which he takes the initiative is secondary. Since controversial apothegms were meant to justify church practices, we must be very cautious in tracing their kernel sayings back to Jesus; here Bultmann agrees with Wellhausen and goes beyond him, even to the point of holding that the scribes and Pharisees were enemies of the church rather than of Jesus.[1] The fact that the kernel sayings have so invariably a universal character makes us suspect elaboration; for instance, while it is very probable that Jesus cleansed the temple, yet the scene is made ideal rather than real by the words: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations, but ye have made it a den of thieves."[2] Everywhere we must reckon with a "*creative power of the controversial form*, with a constantly increasing desire of the church to clothe the words of the Lord in the terminology of a dispute."[3] Consequently the historical value of the apothegms is astonishingly small; out of some twenty biographical

[1] He does not of course deny that they were in some degree hostile to Jesus also.

[2] Bultmann, page 29.

[3] Bultmann, page 35; the italics are his.

incidents Bultmann[1] accepts only two: Lk. 13: 31–33, Mk. 14: 3–9.

While Dibelius contented himself with a summary discussion of the transmission of the sayings of Jesus, Bultmann subjects these to an almost microscopic analysis that descends to half-sentences. He distinguishes five main classes. The first is made up of the logia,[2] or sayings in the form of maxims. Now this form has nothing about it that is characteristic of Jesus; not only do the logia resemble Old Testament wisdom passages, but they can be paralleled equally by the proverbs of almost any people. Consequently the historian has no criterion by which to determine the origin of the logia. From a very early period the church supplemented Jesus' teaching with Old Testament precepts, secular ethical rules, etc.,[3] and it may have done the same from the beginning; perhaps even Q never purported to contain only Jesus' words but may have been composed, frankly and explicitly, of elements of very divergent origin. However, some sixteen of the logia appear to have reasonable authentication as coming from Jesus, thanks to their intense eschatological emotion, their summons to repentance, and their demands for a new heart.[4]

Secondly, we have prophetic and apocalyptic utterances; these are very liable to contamina-

[1] Page 29.

[2] This specialization of a term in common critical use is unfortunate.

[3] Cf. above, page 39 f.

[4] Bultmann, page 63.

tion from the current literature and from Christian experience. Bultmann recognizes only about a dozen of these as relatively trustworthy.[1] Thirdly, legalistic sayings and rules for the church; here conditions are still worse, and not one of the class can be accepted with certainty. Fourthly, sayings in the first person[2]; these involve to a special degree the question of Jesus' Messianic consciousness. While, indeed, Bultmann is not quite prepared to deny the possibility of such a consciousness, he is highly sceptical. So he will admit only five of these first-person sayings,[3] and he thinks a majority of the others are not even Palestinian in their origin. The fifth and last class is the parables. Jülicher's classical analysis is of course accepted, but Bultmann's method continues to make him distrust everything possible. He argues, for instance, that when two parables are similar one of them must have produced the other; the parable of the mustard-seed has "created" the parable of the leaven, etc.

The remaining part of the Synoptic material, including the passion narratives, he divides into "miracles" and "legends" with these definitions: A "miracle" has independent value, a "legend" gains its significance only as applied to the life of the hero.[4] For the miracles he gives a mass of contemporary parallels, of which, however,

[1] Page 77.
[2] This class, it may be observed, makes a cross-division.
[3] Page 92.
[4] Page 150.

he is careful to say[1] that they illustrate only the atmosphere in which the stories took shape, not the actual sources of the Synoptic accounts. The question of historic elements in the miracles he deems practically beneath his notice, and almost everything outside of Q he labels "Hellenistic." But the very term "legends" that he uses to describe all the other historical sections shows that his view of the non-miraculous stories is no more favorable; the most, he thinks, that a historian should do is to divide it into strata according to its origin. And for this he uses Bousset's scheme: Palestinian, Jewish-Hellenistic, and pure Hellenistic.

Finally he reconstructs the process by which the various elements were gradually assembled and incorporated into Gospels. The primitive material, according to his theory, seems to have consisted only of something like forty or fifty sayings or parables, all completely detached. These were grouped in various independent ways—by association of ideas or words—to form longer paragraphs, and were supplemented from non-Christian sources or from the experience of the church. So around minimal nuclei large collections grew up by degrees; one stage of the process is seen in Q, although Bultmann refrains from studying this source as a whole.

In the meantime the same primitive sayings and their supplements were elaborated into apo-

[1] Page 146.

thegms, stories of miracles were told—or were borrowed—and the scanty remains of true historical recollection were decked out with legendary adornments. These various types were likewise grouped into collections, of which the most significant was the passion narrative. But the first attempt at a formal account of the ministry was Mark's. From this point on Bultmann's reconstruction follows traditional lines, but he goes on to survey as well the post-Synoptic stages of tradition—Johannine, subapostolic, and apocryphal.

In this book Bultmann appears as the most radical serious critic since the days of Strauss. Like Strauss his scepticism is far-reaching, as witness the following statement which seems to have been meant conservatively: "It is inherently probable that words of Jesus were remembered in the community"![1] And, like Strauss, his criticism is founded on an astonishingly minute and painstaking investigation of the documents; we may dissent profoundly from his conclusions, but we are bound to gain extraordinary profit from a conscientious study of his work.[2]

In the following year came *The Story of Jesus' Passion and the Cult of Christ*, by Licentiate Georg Bertram, written independently of Bultmann's volume, but constantly agreeing

[1] Page 25.

[2] This is especially true of his disclosure of the richly varied forms of the saying, artificial though his analysis often is.

with it in principles of interpretation. Bertram's chief interest is in the legend, more specifically in the "cult-legend," the narrative framed to express the religious reverence the church felt for Christ.[1] And his method can best be illustrated by a concrete example, for which we may take his treatment of the prayer in Gethsemane. He begins by asserting that this can be understood only as a cult-story, as the fourth Evangelist understood very well when he paraphrased it in his twelfth chapter.[2] The fact of the prayer itself must be historic on account of the difficulty it caused to later tradition, but in the words of the prayer we have cult elaboration. We note first "the hour" in the sense "the hour of fate," to which is equated "the cup." But this must be the eucharistic cup, here in the transferred meaning of "Jehovah's cup of wrath," with consequent cosmic significance. But James and John also expressed their willingness to drink of the same cup, and so Mark transforms the apocalyptic imagery into cult language. Moreover, the sleep of the disciples is clearly not meant to be a natural sleep; it is a supernatural dream condition, doubtless to be referred to demoniac influence. And so the whole scene is not history at all but suprahistory.[3] This example is probably sufficient.

[1] Bertram's definition of "cult" is extremely wide.

[2] Jn. 12 : 27–36. Bertram notes that a motive from the transfiguration is likewise used in this passage.

[3] Bertram, pages 43–45.

Yet Bertram does not represent the extreme development of criticism of this sort; about the last elaboration possible without passing over into purely "mythical" theories is found in Loisy's *The Gospel according to Luke*[1] (1924), one of the nine volumes—some of them of enormous size—which this indefatigable worker produced within a single lustrum. He had travelled far in the seventeen years that followed *The Synoptic Gospels,* although the general direction of his journey finds its indications in his earlier work. The cult-legend theory now dominates everything, and the Gospel is divided throughout into poetical strophes. His historical conclusions are summarized admirably by his comments at the close of Luke's twelfth chapter,[2] where he insists that the chapter shows "exceptionally" how the "so-called Gospel discourses" are arbitrary constructions, made up by grouping sayings that have only the most tenuous connection—if any—with Jesus. But, unfortunately, the detailed exegesis that precedes this summary gives no reasons on which to base his assertion; all we have is a constant general assumption that the tradition hardly ever deserves to be taken seriously enough to warrant an investigation.

K. L. Schmidt's *The Place of the Gospels in*

[1] Compare also his much briefer treatment in his *The Books of the New Testament* (1922).

[2] Page 359.

the General History of Literature (1923) deals with less imaginative data. Schmidt's purpose is fully indicated by the title of the monograph; it is an attempt to find a proper literary classification for the Gospels and, at the same time, for the paragraphs out of which the Gospels are constructed. Such attempts have frequently been made—Schmidt cites the more important books—but most of them fall into the error of endeavoring to range the Gospels among the recognized types of formal biography. On the contrary, the Gospels are "writings of the people, by the people, and for the people,"[1] the work of men who knew and cared nothing for the rules of the rhetoricians. For analogies, consequently, Schmidt looks to such collections as the earliest lives of the saints, etc., and finds even the first form of the Faust stories helpful. But particular significance attaches to the popular Jewish accounts of the mystic known as the Great Maggid, or Lord of the Name, which show unmistakably how a man could become the object of a cult in his own lifetime.

The essential feature about such popular traditions is their anonymity; no individual author stands behind them, and Schmidt believes that the same must be true of the Gospel paragraphs. But he is very careful to point out that such considerations in themselves have no bearing on the truth or falsity of the traditions; indeed,

[1] A phrase of Doctor C. W. Votaw's.

he says explicity: "Popular traditions without literary pretensions may by this very fact have greater historical value than writings self-conscious of their literary character."[1]

In 1923 Dibelius published his *Historical and Supra-Historical Religion,* a constructive survey of his position that stressed the reality of Jesus' Messianic consciousness. Bultmann also published a summary of his earlier book, and in the next year a sketch of his theories in English; in both these monographs his position was maintained unchanged. And so the appearance of his *Jesus* (also in 1926) brought a surprise to his readers, inasmuch as it accepted as authentic many passages that he had previously discarded. In the same year came the new edition of Klostermann's *Mark,* which proved to be deeply influenced by form-criticism; a comparison of the two editions reveals most excellently the changes that two decades had wrought. The corresponding revision of Matthew followed in 1927, as did the new edition of Doctor Montefiore's *The Synoptic Gospels,* which likewise accepts many Dibelius-Bultmann conclusions. And Doctor Cadbury's book, which was mentioned at the close of the last lecture, devotes appropriate space to the question of the forms in the earliest tradition, although he undertakes no form-criticism of his own.

Finally, we may mention three volumes that

[1] Page 81.

use form-criticism in order to reach highly conservative results. The first is *The Synoptic Disputations*, by Licentiate Martin Albertz, published in 1921 but practically ready for the press three years earlier. He centres his attention on the "dialogues," more particularly on the "controversial dialogues," as set "forms" with laws of their own. These laws are studied with the utmost care, but—and this is the essential characteristic of Albertz's method—he feels that the dialogues are perfectly authentic, that the set form was obtained simply by omitting needless details. And so much of his book[1] is devoted to discussing the relation between the original conversations and the Synoptic accounts. Albertz, moreover, goes beyond Dibelius and Bultmann in pointing out evidence of pre-Markan groupings of the material.

The Poetry of Our Lord, a posthumous work of the late Charles Fox Burney, Oriel Professor at Oxford, is a most valuable contribution to the study of Aramaic poetic form in general and the Gospel poetry in particular. Not only is this poetry obedient to the general laws of Semitic parallelism; it has a strict metre and not infrequently a strict rhyme; the true rhymed couplet was very common in Jesus' teaching. But the couplet is not the only unit, for couplets were grouped so as to build formal stanzas, sometimes of considerable ingenuity.[2]

[1] Especially pages 56–101. [2] Cf. below, page 74.

And Burney believed that in this way the question of authenticity was very easily settled; strict poetic form was invariably original and any departure from it proved the interference of an editor. Matters, unfortunately, are not so simple as this, for editors frequently feel it their duty to reduce their material to conventional regularity, and Burney's method can be used to prove that some typically Pauline passages are utterances of Jesus. But he supplied Synoptic workers with an additional test that should never be neglected. And the importance of the poetic form as an aid to oral tradition can scarcely be overestimated.

Mr. J. M. C. Crum's book on Q makes liberal use of Burney's principles and applies them toward establishing a definite "Q form."

THE LIMITS OF FORM-CRITICISM

III

THE LIMITS OF FORM-CRITICISM

IT was not to be expected that form-criticism could itself be exempt from critical examination, and in 1924 such an examination appeared, *The Form-Historical Method*, by Licentiate Emil Fascher. After a fifty-page survey of the history of the method prior to 1919, he analyzes most minutely Dibelius, Bultmann, Albertz, and Bertram in turn, and he concludes his study with an illuminating appraisal of the method as a whole; in particular, he undertakes to define what the new discipline really can accomplish, and to establish what lies beyond its reach. Much, he holds, that calls itself form-criticism is really something very different, for the basic requirement of the method—that it should argue from the form itself—is regularly disregarded by its proponents. When Dibelius, for instance, makes the paradigm the most important class, he uses a term that does not designate a form; "paradigm" expresses rather the function that examples of many types may fulfil. There is doubtless a large measure of agreement between Dibelius's paradigms, Bultmann's apothegms, and Albertz's controversies. But there is a large measure of disagreement as

well,[1] which is more than a little due to importing into form-discussions matters that have no place there. And so Fascher proposes a simpler and more clear-cut classification.

In the first place we have dialogues, possibly controversial and possibly merely pedagogic, but their character as dialogues suffices to establish them as a definite class. Then there are the sayings, subdivision of which does not seem practical. And last of all the miracles, again an obvious class by themselves. These three classes, moreover, are really based on motives that belong to the Synoptic tradition itself. "The disputations show us Jesus as the Rabbi, the sayings as the Teacher, the miracles as the Wonder-worker. These literary types, poor in historic detail, little interested in the private life of their Hero, show Jesus purely objectively in his calling, which includes his criticism of the Law, preaching the Gospel, and healing the sick."[2] The material that lies outside these classes Fascher does not regard as a proper object for form-criticism, because all the proposed classes convey not literary but historic judgments. And he sums up with this dictum: Form-criticism is not in itself a historic tool; by itself it can tell us nothing of the truth or falsity of events narrated.[3]

With Fascher we may conclude our historical

[1] See the table on page 196 of Fascher's book.
[2] Fascher, page 201. [3] Fascher, page 223.

retrospect, and may begin our own examination of the subject.

Paradigms, stories, legends, cult-legends, epiphanies, apothegms, miracles, parables, folk-tales, controversies, dialogues, parenesis, logia, prophetic and apocalyptic utterances, church rules, sayings in the first person, allegories, poem stanzas—the research of the past decade has exhibited no poverty of terminology! But how profitable is it all? Can we really analyze forms with such precision as to make form-criticism a true discipline?

Obviously there are difficulties. In all classifications a large artificial element is inevitable, for the originators of the Synoptic tradition were unconscious of literary types[1] and our nomenclature represents distinctions which we superimpose on the ancient material. So no scheme can be more than approximately satisfactory; cross-divisions are inevitable, and various traditions will resist our most determined efforts to affix descriptive labels. None the less, a sufficient beginning has been made to show that the undertaking has real profit.

But—and here Fascher is absolutely right—if we are to attempt a classification of forms, we must classify forms and not something else. When Dibelius speaks of "myths," for instance, he violates this rule, for the myth has no set

[1] Even the "parable" in its rigid modern definition is no exception.

form of any kind. The name describes not the outward structure but the contents[1] of a narrative; myths may be recounted in stories of every possible type, and detection of mythical elements belongs not to the literary critic but to the historian. And precisely the same is true of the folk-tale, which may be told—quite literally—in any conceivable way; Bultmann justly refuses to admit any such form category, despite his firm conviction that folk-tale motifs abound in the Synoptic tradition.

The case of the "legend" is more complicated, and is causing much unconscious confusion. Properly speaking, of course, the "legend" is "that which is read," and so technically "that which is read in Divine service"; more specifically still "legends" are "selected chronicles from the lives of the saints." But, since the usual tendency of hagiography is toward a love of the marvellous for its own sake, "legendary" has taken on an acquired sense of "unhistorical,"[2] and the combination "true legend" has come to be a contradiction in terms, something that it was not originally. But this newer sense of the word has nothing to do with the *form* of a narrative, but is a historical value-judgment

[1] Or, perhaps in some degree, the *style* of a narrative. Cf. the next lecture.

[2] In English, thanks to this enlarged meaning, "legend" can describe fanciful secular stories as well; in German such a story is a *Sage*, while *Legende* is reserved for religious tales. It is naturally in the religious sense that "legend" is used in Synoptic research.

passed on the facts as set forth. We may say truly that tales in the *Vitae Sanctorum* are so palpably preposterous that no historian would waste his time even in attacking their credibility. But this quality does not come from the fact that they are *legenda,* for even the *Vitae Sanctorum* contains much that is wholly—even prosaically—veracious. So, granting that a story is recognizable in a literary sense as a "legend," we have not by that fact alone made progress toward appraising its historical value.

But may we say that "legend" can be used in a purely literary sense? Has the "legend" any true "form?" Dibelius has endeavored to supply a definition: the legend is a paradigm in which appears an independent interest in Jesus' interlocutors.[1] *I. e.,* his idea seems to be that we have beginnings of the *Vitae Sanctorum* concepts when Christians began to record what (say) Peter said or did. There is more than a little truth in this, but Dibelius does not use his classification to subserve literary ends. Instead, we find "legend" gliding from its literary to its historical sense, until we have the doctrine that any variation from the strict paradigm form must represent later interests, and presumably therefore must be erroneous.

Bultmann's definition of "legend" as "a story that gains its significance only as applied to the life of the hero"[2] is extremely vague. And the

[1] Cf. above, page 40. [2] Above, page 47.

narratives that he includes under this title have no common form at all, but are stories of the most diverse types, such as the baptism, the temptation, and Peter's confession. Bertram's "cult-legends" are in no better case, nor are Dibelius's "epiphanies"; what form characteristics are possesd jointly by the baptism and the walking on the water? Consequently we shall do best to exclude all these terms from the present part of our discussion. From the historical standpoint questions as to the possible presence of mythical, legendary, cult-legendary, and epiphany elements are wholly legitimate, and they demand an answer. But neither can the questions be asked nor the answers given from the standpoint of form-criticism.

Once more, if we are to study forms, our classification must rest on the forms and not on extraneous considerations. So we can simplify our terminology still further by observing that —as far as pure form is concerned—the paradigms, apothegms, and controversies are approximately the same thing, and we may content ourselves with Fascher's simple designation, "dialogues."

To resummarize the dialogue characteristics: From the purely external standpoint dialogues are about the same length, generally from five to eight verses; the longest being the rather complicated section Mk. 7:1–23 and the shortest the brief scene Mk. 8:11–12. In Mk. 10:

35–45 we have two dialogues[1] united by continuity of subject, and in Mk. 10:17–31 three dialogues[2] are connected in a common scene; compare the temptation story and Lk. 9:57–62. Otherwise each dialogue is practically an independent unit, while the passages just mentioned are capable of resolution into such units.[3]

Each dialogue contains a single "kernal" saying of Jesus, which relates the question at issue to a universal principle; or in Mk. 7:28 and Lk. 10:27 such a saying enunciated by another person is approved by him.[4] Occasionally this kernal saying follows a preliminary answer and is separated from it by a transition formula.[5] And generally the saying closes the scene; although there are a few exceptions, most notably in Mk. 7:18–23, 10:10 f., 10:26, where the principle is analyzed for the sake of inquirers.[6] But in many instances a completed dialogue may be followed by one or more parables[7] or by an extended discourse.[8]

As a rule the dialogues describe interlocutors only in the vaguest terms, at times with nothing

[1] Verses 35–40, 41–45. [2] Verses 17–22, 23–27, 28–31.

[3] If for Mk. 10:41 should be substituted (say) Lk. 22:24, verses 41–45 could stand alone.

[4] Cf. Mk. 8:30. In Lk. 7:43 the crucial principle is uttered by a Pharisee, but Jesus has put the words into his mouth. The construction of Mk. 12:28–34 is unique.

[5] Very simply worded in Mk. 2:27 f., 3:34 f., with solemn elaboration in Mk. 7:14 f., 8:34–38.

[6] Cf. Mk. 4:10, Mt. 13:36, although the context is in neither case a true dialogue. Cf. also Mk. 9:28 f.

[7] Mt. 18:23 ff., etc. [8] Lk. 17:22 ff., etc.

more than "they."[1] More elaborate description is normally limited to naming their party, and in this case they rarely have a spokesman; "the scribes ask him," "the Pharisees tempt him, saying" are regular formulas. And when individual opponents are introduced, Jesus may reply in the plural.[2]

If the questioners are friendly, individuals may be mentioned more freely, but even then "the disciples" is usually thought to be description enough. Perhaps Lk. 10:38–42 depicts interlocutors in the greatest detail, but even here the picture is very slightly sketched. Indications of place are scanty and notes of time[3] still more so; the non-appearance of such features facilitates independent use of the separate dialogues.

In brief, the dialogue states in a most easily remembered form Jesus' concrete statement of a general principle. And, obviously, the dialogues were framed in order to teach such principles, usually without further concern. But the special reason for the creation and preservation of any given dialogue must be studied separately in each case, and problems of possible subclassification need not detain us now. We may emphasize, however, the significant fact that the tradition which formed and transmitted the dialogues insisted that special questions were

[1] Mk. 2:18, Lk. 11:15 f.

[2] Lk. 11:39, 13:15. The most important exceptions are Lk. 7:40 and Mk. 12:34.

[3] Outside of the obvious "On a sabbath" before a synagogue scene.

always to be solved by reference to general principles.

The next form is that of the miracles, much the greater number of which are miracles of healing. Here, unquestionably, is a definite type of story with abundant parallels throughout the ancient world everywhere.[1] Such stories naturally begin by describing the nature of the sufferer's ailment, and they generally insist on its incurable character. The acts and words of the healer are detailed minutely, the latter often being given in the original language, since formulas were supposed to lose their efficacy if translated. Quite frequently we are told that the cure was performed away from the general public, so that the process might not be exposed to vulgar eyes.[2] The use of spittle is common, and faith in its powers was wide-spread, particularly when it came from a holy man. Just so a "sigh," or forcible expulsion of the breath over the patient, might be thought to drive out the disease. The healer's success is usually instantaneous and is invariably complete, the perfect recovery of health being attested by unimpeachable witnesses. And, of course, the purpose of all these details is to glorify the power of the wonder-worker and to prove his control of supernatural forces.

A typical example of such a story appears in

[1] Cf. especially the collections in the books of Weinreich and Fiebig cited in the Bibliography.

[2] The narrator, however, always has full information.

the ninth chapter of John. The man was born blind and was therefore incurable by human means. The technic of the miracle—in this case performed in full publicity—is described minutely, and it includes the use of spittle. The attestation is elaborate: the neighbors at first doubt, but are convinced by the man's own testimony, while the incredulous Pharisees go to the length of consulting his parents before they will acknowledge the facts. And the primary moral drawn is the power manifested in the cure: Jesus must have come from God, for "since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind." The other Johannine miracles are of the same type,[1] and those in Acts approximate it, especially the account in 3: 1–10.[2] And in the Synoptists we have virtually the "pure" form in Mk. 5: 1–20 and Lk. 7: 11—1,[3] with various other narratives that approach it more or less closely. On the other hand, we have in the Synoptists many miracles used for an entirely different purpose, to show the power of human faith. The historical significance of this will be discussed later;[4] for the present it is enough to note that the faith ele-

[1] Note particularly 5 : 1–18, where the sufferer is merely the passive and morally unattractive (v. 14) object of the cure.

[2] At the moment of the miracle the man's mind is fixed on money (v. 5).

[3] The close similarity between this and the story in Philostratus, *Apollonius* iv, 45, has often been noted.

[4] Page 132.

ment runs counter to the aim of the contemporary "form."

The nature miracles have, on the contrary, very scanty parallels, and attempts to find such in Jewish or Hellenistic sources have not proved very happy. For instance, to illustrate the stilling of the tempest in Mk. 4:35–41, Bousset[1] cites as "quite similar" the following story from the Talmud.[2] "Rabbi Gamaliel II was on shipboard in a tempest. He said, 'It seems to me that this is due solely to Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus' [whom he had excommunicated]. He arose and prayed, 'Lord of the world, it is well known to thee that I excommunicated him, not for my honor nor for the honor of my father's house, but to thy honor lest divisions in Israel increase.' Then the sea became calm." The "close similarity" is not over-obvious, and in any case we must realize that no "form" can be established for these nature miracles.[3] Moreover, the "faith" motive may appear in them also (Mk. 4:40, 11:22).

Finally we may note that none of the miracles is lengthy. Sending the demons into the swine is the longest, and it fills only twenty verses in Mark, while the pre-Markan version must have been much shorter; the Evangelist's editorial additions are evidently extensive.

Apart from the miracles we still have a con-

[1] *Sch. N. T.*, 3d ed., I, page 118. [2] *Baba Meziah*, 59*b*.
[3] Bultmann agrees; cf. above, page 48.

siderable bulk of narrative material, mostly in the passion stories. This Fascher declines to classify, and he is probably well advised. We observe everywhere crisp little paragraphs. A large number of them contain one—few contain more than one—significant saying, and we may be reasonably sure that the sayings are the reason for preserving the sections. Other paragraphs centre about a significant act, and perhaps in this way we might distinguish between two kinds of narrative. But the line of demarcation is very shadowy; how for instance should we class the anointing at Bethany? Naturally the almost invariable interest is in the sayings and doings of Jesus, or in events—such as Judas's treachery—that concern him directly. This is so obvious as to be hardly worth recording, were it not that it represents the real basis of contention in Bertram's "cult-legend" theory; the risen Master, as God's Messiah, held an objective place in the religion of even the earliest Christians.

On occasion, though, Jesus' disciples may appear as something more than mere interlocutors, and they may be given individual traits. Generally, no doubt, the motive is primarily practical; the readiness of Peter and the others to obey the call "Follow me!" is an example that all Christians should imitate, while the less edifying events, such as Peter's denial, are instances of what all Christians should avoid. And yet we need not perplex ourselves over the fact that

members of the early church were really interested in these first believers, be they apostles, the father of Alexander and Rufus, or only a young man with a linen cloth about his body. Why should such interest be thought strange?

The only stories that do not bear directly on Jesus are those that tell of the birth and the death of the Baptist. The former, naturally, have a tradition and an interest of their own that need not concern us here. And the latter, which will be discussed later on,[1] is unique in other regards as well.

Our next question is this: In pre-Markan days were the various paragraphs[2] transmitted separately, as Dibelius maintains, or were they already joined in cycles? Mark's Gospel itself supplies the answer. In 2:1–3:6 we have a collection of five controversies concluded by the words: "The Pharisees with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him." But, as has often been noted, this verse stands much too early in the narrative,[3] and it is difficult to comprehend except as the original conclusion of a controversy-cycle which Mark has incorporated bodily. Or, noting that the wording of Mk. 3:6 recurs in 12:13[4] at the beginning of another series of the same "forms,"

[1] Page 141. [2] Apart from the passion story.
[3] As Luke (6:11) recognized in this revision. In Matthew (12:14) the passage occurs at a much later point.
[4] Giving an awkwardly different sense to "Herodians" in the two verses.

we may explain the earlier verse as an echo of what was the next phrase in a cycle that Mark has bisected. Again, while Mark's fourth chapter is concerned chiefly with parables, its contents are united by the description of Jesus' teaching from a boat. But this feature is certainly not due to the Evangelist, for it is inconsistent with his own surcharges.[1] The same boat, moreover, is used to connect the parable scene with the next section[2] and its movements make the transitions throughout this section.

But the most striking evidence of pre-Markan cycles appears in 6:30–8:26, the two parts of which (6:30–7:37 and 8:1–26) are in extraordinary parallelism: a miraculous feeding, a journey across the lake, a controversy with the Pharisees, a departure from Galilee, a saying about bread, and a healing. As we cannot believe that Mark was consciously responsible for this long chain of doublets, we must suppose that the two series were circulated separately and that the Evangelist combined them. Another striking parallelism appears in 9:30–50 and 10:32–45, where a prediction of the passion is followed by a dispute about rank, and this in turn by a discourse on humility and service. A closer investigation of Mark for other pre-Markan groupings of paragraphs will be a useful task for future students.

[1] Especially verse 10.

[2] Mk. 4:35–5:43, a group of miracles, illustrating various aspects of faith.

Turning now from the study of Jesus' acts to a consideration of his sayings, one highly distinct form meets us immediately, the parable. But on the form of the parable just about all has been written that can possibly be written, and we need not reopen the subject. As regards the other sayings, they are usually found in groups and sometimes derive their meaning only from their context. For instance, Lk. 17:37 = Mt. 24:28, "Where the body is, thither will the eagles also be gathered together," is in itself only a secular proverb, as Bultmann notes.[1] But when taken in answer to the question, "Where will judgment be held?" it is an attack on the concept precious to apocalyptists which pictures a great assize in a definite locality. That is, it substitutes a spiritual eschatology for a physical.

But sayings of this sort are, on the whole, the exception; most of the groups can be resolved into units of single sentences that can be used independently. Indeed, there are even unit sentences which have no true context and are merely scattered somewhat at random through the Gospels.[2] But attempts at classifying the unit sentences are not very helpful. We may, with Bultmann, Burney, and others, divide them into those displaying synonymous parallelism, antithetic parallelism, deductions from the less to

[1] Cf. his list of "secular sayings" on pages 61 f. of his book. It has been formed by a process of over-dissection.

[2] Mt. 7 : 6, 22 : 14, Lk. 18 : 8*b*, etc.

the greater, etc., and for certain purposes these divisions are really serviceable. But we cannot conceive that the tradition was interested in such distinctions, nor can we hope in this way to learn anything about the eventual origin of the material. And Bultmann's further analysis into logia, etc., has nothing to do with forms; what *form* difference is there between the "logion"—"Whosoever exalteth himself shall be humbled"—the "apocalyptic word"—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, the Son of man shall be ashamed of him"—and the "church rule"—"Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery"?

If we are seeking for forms we must look beyond the single sentences to the sayings groups, a subject that still needs detailed investigation. The most important contribution thus far is the demonstration—Burney's, most notably—that many of these groups are poem stanzas.[1] The Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes in their Matthæan version are striking instances,[2] but there are many others; Burney studies, *e. g.*, Lk. 6:27–29, 6:36–38, 11:9 f. (= Mt. 7:7 f). And such stanzas are exceptionally interesting when they occur in a context in prose or in a different rhythm.[3] Only a scholar thoroughly at

[1] Loisy's latest theory which makes each of the Gospels a long liturgical poem is merely fanciful.

[2] Burney, pages 112 f., 165–168.

[3] Cf. Burney, pages 137–140, on Lk. 13:23–27, or pages 122 f., on Mt. 10:24–27.

home in Aramaic can carry on such investigation with complete effectiveness, but even in Greek or English many stanzas can easily be detected. And in Lk. 6: 32–35 we have a stanza group, in formal parallelism and with a concluding summary:

If ye love them that love you,
What thank have ye?
For even sinners love those that love them.

If ye do good to them that do good to you,
What thank have ye?
For even sinners do the same.

If ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive,
What thank have ye?
Even sinners lend to sinners to receive again as much.

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend,
Never despairing!
And your reward shall be great,
And ye shall be sons of the Most High.

Even where the poetic stanza is absent, regularity of structure may be observed. In Mt. 6: 1–6, 16–18 we have an introductory generalization elaborated in parallelism under the three heads of alms, prayer, and fasting.[1] In Lk. 11: 42–52 three woes on the Pharisees are paralleled by three woes on the lawyers, all prefaced by a common introduction (verses 37–41);[2] in Mt. 23: 13–36 we have instead a sevenfold

[1] No insight is needed to see that verses 7–15 break the context.
[2] The parallelism was stricter in L.; Luke has added bits of Q.

woe on scribes and Pharisees jointly. And embedded in the present text of Mt. 5:17–7:12 is the most elaborate construction of all, a general theme, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to bring to fulfilment," followed by a variety of special examples (anger, impurity, perjury, etc.), and concluded with the summary: "All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets."

But the great bulk of the sayings are found in groups—whether in poetry or prose—or from four to a dozen verses,[1] and are united only by a common theme. When longer discourses occur, they are formed by agglomerating a number of such groups,[2] which the Evangelists arrange freely to suit their own purposes. Very commonly the paragraphs lead up to a climax,[3] which is often a practical generalization.[4] Or they may begin[5] or end[6] with a parable; in Lk. 12:13 ff. we have a brief dialogue, illustrated by a parable, whose theme is elaborated in a discourse. It is only in the apocalyptic passages that we have anything really like a sustained development of a subject, but these, as every Synoptic

[1] Probably not so many in the sources that underlie our Gospels.
[2] Quite exceptional is Mk. 9:33–50, a cento of verses often linked only by the recurrence of a common word.
[3] Lk. 7:24–28, 11:9–13, 12:49–53, etc.
[4] Lk. 7:35, 11:20, 12:31, etc.
[5] Lk. 11:5–8, etc. [6] Mt. 18:23–35, etc.

student knows, are complex compositions whose elements—as far as they come from Jesus—are the usual brief paragraphs.

This appears to be about the extent to which a form-analysis of our material can profitably be carried. And it reveals one fact unmistakably. The units of which the Synoptic tradition is composed, be they dialogues, miracles, narrative paragraphs, parables, poem stanzas or groups of prose sayings, are all exceedingly easy to memorize. And we cannot fail to recognize that these forms were utilized precisely because they were easy to memorize; that is, because they could be transmitted readily in the oral tradition. In other words, form-study brings us into contact with the earliest Christian pedagogy, and so should prove a fruitful field of study, particularly in the light it will throw on the early Palestinian Christian interests. This is reason enough to give the new discipline our full attention.

But can it carry us farther? And, especially, will the forms by themselves tell us anything about their own date? Dibelius thinks they will; in fact, he argues for a carefully graduated chronological scheme in which each type finds its niche. And he even holds[1] that his criteria are destined to eliminate arbitrary subjectivity from Gospel research. Any method with such promise is worth our most ardent study, and so we must recapitulate his theory.

1 Page 99.

As he sees things, the tradition about Jesus began with parenesis, or the collection of his sayings for moral instruction. With the Gentile mission the paradigm was developed, examples destined to serve the use of Christian preachers to the unconverted. But the founding of the Gentile communities led to an interest in Jesus' miracles for their own sake, and so to the creation of the stories. Mixtures of stories and paradigms are still later, while in general the addition of mythical elements is later still. Mark's Gospel combined many disassociated elements into a continuous whole, the Evangelist giving the account a further mythical and theological coloring. And this Gospel, in turn, reacted on the collection of sayings to produce new ones, some of which we can identify in Q.

The orderly simplicity of this reconstruction is admirable, but perfect logic as a true representation of history always awakens mistrust. And, as a matter of fact, Dibelius involves himself in the charge of "arbitrary subjectivity" that he levels against his predecessors. In the first place, his assertion that we cannot carry the paradigms behind the beginning of the Gentile mission is contradicted by the evidence. Two of his own examples of the "perfect" form—Mk. 2:23–27 and 3:1–5—deal solely with the technicalities of Sabbath observance, and a similar Jewish interest is dominant elsewhere. In the second place, the limitation of his analysis to

mission-preaching is equally unwarranted. Sermons addressed to Christian congregations must have outnumbered mission sermons enormously, and they would have been vastly more potent in fixing a tradition of homiletic illustrations. But formal preaching was far from being the sole Christian pedagogic activity. The Book of Acts certainly reflects the current practice when it describes the baptism of converts with astonishingly little preparation, and the education of such neo-Christians must have been a pressing problem everywhere. Part of the training was of course gained in the public meetings for worship, but there must have been endless sessions for private instruction as well. And, in the latter, proper "forms" were wholly indispensable.

But the fundamental weakness in Dibelius's theory is that it rests on premises which are baldly theological. According to him, the earliest and purest Christianity occupied itself solely with an other-worldly ethic and an even more other-worldly apocalyptic; apparently this first church had no Christological interests at all. Not until the Gentile mission began did the acts of Jesus become part of the regular preaching, although even then they were used merely to illustrate ethical themes. Only after degeneration had taken place and the "world" had entered in were the miracles valued for their own sake; on this point Dibelius is especially emphatic. In other words, the sainthood of the first believers

was even more celestial than Luke pictures in the opening chapters of Acts! And a refutation seems superfluous.

"Paradigms" and "stories" show different tendencies but not different dates of origin. Neither need be the outgrowth of the other, nor need "mixed" forms be preceded by "pure" forms; why might not the preacher, the story-teller, and the teacher be one and the same person? Moreover, once the visions of the risen Christ had been experienced, "epiphany" and "mythical" motives—if we insist on calling them by such names—were inevitable. Dibelius sees this clearly enough when he acknowledges that the first tendencies in these directions may be due to the very first eye-witnesses, although he makes no attempt to reconcile this admission with his theory as a whole.

So, once we refrain from attributing an impossible simplicity of development to the earliest church, we must realize that form-criticism as a historical tool has a very limited utility. It can tell us that the manner of phrasing is conventional, and it can explain the conventions. It can tell us why a certain wording was used, why certain details were added or omitted. And it can tell us—within limits—something of the use to which the material was put. But the study of forms *as forms* cannot carry us farther. In Synoptic research, at all events, it cannot give us even the relative ages of the special forms it

identifies,[1] and the absolute ages lie totally beyond its reach. Nor can it aid our historical estimate of the contents of any story. Form-criticism, by its very nature, cannot distinguish between a dialogue artificially built up from a striking phrase and a conventional abbreviation of a precise record of a conversation in which the same phrase appeared. It cannot distinguish between a popular legend of a healing and a narrative, told in a popular way, of a successful use of psychotherapy. And so we are obliged to say: Form-criticism may prepare the way for historical criticism, but form-criticism is not historical criticism.

[1] We naturally do not need form-criticism to know that an artificially complex paragraph must be later than its elements.

THE SYNOPTIC PERSPECTIVE

IV

THE SYNOPTIC PERSPECTIVE

FORM-CRITICISM must confine itself to the study of forms, without attempting tasks that lie beyond its reach. And so the use of form-criticism to detect legendary elements in the Gospels was a mistake, since the legend as such has and can have no peculiar form of its own.

Yet, form or no form, if we take, for instance, half a dozen stories from the *Vitæ Sanctorum* and a similar number from the traditions about Buddha, we shall find a very definite common element running through them all; an element difficult, perhaps, to define but clearly recognizable for all that. It is familiar to every investigator, and we may call it the legendary "style." And when Wellhausen and subsequent scholars speak of the "legend," what they really mean is "a story composed in legendary style." Consequently our exclusion of form-criticism from the analysis of legends leaves the main contentions of these critics unaffected. When, they ask, we read of a storm being quelled by a word, of a fig-tree withering instantaneously, of dried fish being multiplied by the thousand, or of demons going out of men into swine, are we dealing with

anything that deserves or can deserve the courtesy of historical investigation? When we meet similar stories in an account of a Hindu saint we do not trouble even to wave them aside; the painstaking historian may analyze the motives in unusual versions or may study the history of frequently recurring details, but no one will think the question of historical truth worth the raising. So why should we treat the Synoptic stories differently? Does not their very presence prove that the tradition can have only a tenuous connection with eye-witnesses?

Wellhausen's affirmative answer to this last question was qualified, but Bousset and the others see no need of qualifying anywhere. And, once they had adopted this attitude toward the miracles, they extended it—logically and comprehensibly enough—to cover the rest of the Synoptic tradition as well. The large legendary element debars us from accepting the Synoptists as primary evidence for anything except the tenets of the church at the time the Evangelists wrote. From the sources utilized by the latter we may also learn much about corresponding beliefs during the preceding decades, but the information the Gospels give us about Jesus is precarious; the burden of proof is always on the student who wishes to treat as authentic any saying or act.

Consequently an investigation of the question of the Synoptic historical perspective is incum-

bent on us. And we may commence with the tradition of Jesus' words.

Within the whole body of the sayings as transmitted every one recognizes that there are some of very questionable authority and some of almost impregnable authenticity. Individual students will of course have their own opinions as to what should be included in each of these classes—especially the second—but every one will agree to the above statement as a matter of principle.[1] The problems arise with the much greater number of sayings that represent neither extreme, and which may reasonably be read and understood in more than one way. To take a simple instance, "Ye are the salt of the earth" can be taken as expressing the exalted self-consciousness of the early church, or as praise addressed by Jesus to a group of disciples, or even as a common Jewish saying about Jews. Again, in "He that receiveth you receiveth me" we may ask whether the speaker is the earthly Jesus or the heavenly Christ; the earlier church undoubtedly read it in the latter sense, but this fact does not exclude the possibility of its having been really uttered by Jesus. Or does "Beware of men, for they will deliver you up" record a genuine prediction or is it the result of experience in later days? From such sayings taken by themselves no convincing conclusion

[1] Strict theological conservatives and adherents of the "mythical" school are the sole exceptions.

can possibly be drawn. Our research, accordingly, must have a wider scope and must consider the sayings as a whole. And we must put our reliance only on tests that can be objectively verified.

The fact that a saying *may* have been spoken by Jesus or that it *may* have originated in the apostolic age leads us nowhere; we must find some means of distinguishing unambiguously. And only one method seems possible. Let us select tenets that were certainly held by the first church but which were not part of Jesus' message.[1] Then, if we find these freely placed in his mouth by the Synoptists, we must agree that the tradition is largely of apostolic creation. If, on the other hand, we find that our witnesses are chary of seeking such authentication for their own beliefs, we are equally bound to conclude that the tradition was carefully guarded.

The earlier our point of departure the more secure our results, and so we shall centre our attention on the first Christianity of Palestine. Undoubtedly our knowledge of this period is limited, but by making the most of what little direct evidence we have, by arguing back from the Pauline testimony and forward from Judaism, and by giving due weight to the obvious necessities of the case, we may feel assured of at least the essential matters. This Palestinian church was saturated with experiences of the

[1] Or were taught by him only on occasion.

Spirit, especially prophecy and "tongues," and the gift of the Spirit was undoubtedly connected by the first Christians with the exalted Son of Man.[1] These Christians believed, moreover, that the coming of Jesus and the details of his ministry had been predicted in the Old Testament; an apologetic based on Old Testament prophecy was essentially characteristic of Jewish Christianity. That Jesus was a descendant of David was particularly prominent in this argument. As Son of Man Jesus' knowledge must have been inerrant, and as Son of Man he must have existed from before creation.[2] In his name Christians were persuaded that they could perform marvellous works, more especially exorcism. The rite of the Agape-Eucharist was universal in Palestine from very early days, as was the baptism of converts. And by the fifth decade of the century a most burning question was the right of Gentile converts to admission without circumcision.

That the above beliefs and practices were characteristic of Palestinianism need not be argued, and that Jesus could have had but little to say about them is equally evident. Now how far do the Synoptists read back these interests of the church into Jesus' own teaching? For the sake of completeness it may be well to assemble

[1] Cf. Testament of Levi 18 : 11, Testament of Judah 24 : 2–3.

[2] As this belief is always connected with Son of Man doctrines in Judaism except in Dnl. 7, and as Paul takes it as axiomatic, it must have been rapidly adopted by the church.

the more important evidence rather fully, but we must of course distinguish between the strata; the fact that a doctrine is found in an explicit note of an Evangelist has no importance for our purpose, as we are interested solely in anachronisms.

In the first place, then, regarding the Synoptic teaching about the Spirit. As far as Q is concerned, we meet at once a surprising fact: the beginner in Synoptic work who reconstructs Q by the mechanical rule[1] will discover to his probable amazement that the result contains no mention of the Spirit at all! But, as a matter of fact, Q and Mark overlap to some extent, and the following passages may safely be assigned to Q: Lk. 3:16 = Mt. 3:11 (cf. Mk. 1:8), the Baptist's prediction of the double eschatological outpouring; Lk. 12:10 = Mt. 12:31 f. (cf. Mk. 3:29), Jesus' warning against blaspheming the Spirit; Lk. 12:12 = Mt. 10:20 (cf. Mk. 13:11), Jesus' promise of the Spirit as an aid in persecution. And, in addition, Q presumably mentioned the Spirit at the beginning of the account of Jesus' temptation.[2]

In Mark we have the three passages just cited. The second and third of these have the same sense as Q, but many scholars think that in the first instance the omission of "and with fire" makes the Baptist predict the gift of the Spirit

[1] Exact agreements of Luke and Matthew where there is no Markan parallel.

[2] Note the two occurrences of "Spirit" in Lk. 4:1, in contrast to Mk. 1:12.

in Christian baptism. Then there is the descent of the Spirit on Jesus (Mk. 1:10), the Spirit's action in driving him into the wilderness (Mk. 1:12), and the very conventional statement that David was inspired by the Spirit when he wrote the Psalms (Mk. 12:36).

As regards the later Evangelists, Luke and Matthew each insert exactly once a mention of the Spirit into words of Jesus in a Q context: Mt. 12:28 makes "the Spirit of God" the agent in Jesus' exorcisms where Lk. 11:20 has "the finger of God," and, conversely, where Mt. 7:11 reads "gives good things" Lk. 11:13 has "give the holy Spirit." Apart from these instances, Matthew uses "Spirit" twice in his first chapter (1:18, 20)—and one of these occurrences is part of the Evangelist's own narrative —and 12:18 in an explicit citation of Isa. 42:1 as applied to the Messiah. Otherwise we have only Mt. 28:19, where "Spirit" occurs in the baptismal formula, but the text is notoriously uncertain and, in any event, the speaker is the risen Christ, not the earthly Jesus. Luke uses the term seven times in his first two chapters, but always in a conventionally Jewish sense. Then we have two statements by the Evangelist 4:14, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit" (an echo of 4:1), and 10:21, "Jesus rejoiced in the holy Spirit." In 4:18 there is a citation of Isa. 61:1. And there are no other passages, unless we add 24:49, "Until ye be clothed with power from on high," where the Spirit is

evidently meant; but here again the speaker is the risen Christ.

These results speak for themselves. When we examine these passages for predictions of spiritual gifts we may find such a sense in Mk. 1:8; but we must observe that this meaning is very conjectural, that—if it does exist—it is gained merely by Mark's abbreviation of a saying already in the tradition, and that the promise is not uttered by Jesus but by the Baptist. We certainly have a prediction of the Spirit's aid in Lk. 12:12 and parallels, but it is restricted to the very unusual occasion of formal persecution, and may perfectly well be an authentic utterance of Jesus. The resurrection traditions represented by Mt. 28:19 and Lk. 24:49 have a special history of their own, distinct from that of the main Synoptic stream. The statement in Mt. 12:28 is limited to Jesus himself. And so we are reduced to Lk. 11:13; exactly *one* clear instance where the church's experience is read back!

The significance of this test should be clearly realized. Bousset noted duly that "The Lord" as a title for Christ in narration is restricted to Luke.[1] And so his theory about Synoptic perspective led him to deduce that Christ was not thought of as "The Lord" until the days of Gentile Christianity.[2] But if he had applied the

[1] Cf. above, page 20.

[2] As a matter of fact, however, most of Luke's narrative instances of "Lord" come from L, a strictly Jewish source.

same method to determine the church's interest in the Spirit he would have been led to an even more drastic conclusion; he would have gathered that only the Gentile church knew anything about spiritual gifts and that the Gentiles themselves did not prize them particularly. Yet nothing could be in more flagrant contradiction of the known facts, and consequently, even at this early stage of our investigation, we may feel serious doubts about the validity of Bousset's assumptions, and we may wonder if the early church did not, after all, distinguish between what it experienced and what Jesus taught.

Most prominent in primitive Christianity were the prophets, and so we might expect to find prophecy frequently mentioned in the Gospels. But in Mark the gift is not alluded to at all. In Q[1] we have only Lk. 11:49 = Mt. 23:34, "I will send unto them (you?) prophets," words which the Evangelists doubtless understood as describing Christian charismatics. But it does not follow that this was the sense in Q. And Q, as Luke's version shows, gave this saying as a citation from "The Wisdom of God,"[2] and the citation is continued or echoed in Lk. 11:50, "That the blood of the prophets may be required of

[1] Lk. 6:23 = Mt. 5:12, "For in the same manner did their fathers unto the prophets," is not relevant; in this verse "prophets" corresponds to "all Christians," not to an especially endowed group among them.

[2] Presumably some lost (pre-Christian?) source. The use of an apocryphon is, of course, in itself no reason to deny that Jesus could have so spoken.

this generation." The only other Synoptic passages are in Matthew: 10:41, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet," etc., where "prophet" certainly does not describe a special class among Christians, and 7:22, "Did we not prophesy in thy name?" In this last instance there is an obvious suspicion of Christian remodelling, and this suspicion is confirmed by a comparison with the parallel in Lk. 13:26, which says nothing about prophecy. And so again we have a clear instance of an anachronism—but again we have only *one* such instance in the whole tradition.

The gift of tongues, whose apostolic importance is notorious, is ignored by all the Synoptists. The lack is supplied by the appendix to Mark (Mk. 16:17), although even the comparatively late writer of this section makes the risen and not the earthly Christ promise the endowment.

For Jesus himself as the giver of spiritual gifts we have the following passages. Unambiguous are Mt. 28:20, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," and Lk. 24:49, "I send forth the promise of my Father upon you," but here again the risen Christ is the speaker. In the pre-resurrection period the equation of "Son of Man" with "Spirit" evidently underlies the L saying Lk. 21:15, "For I will give you mouth and wisdom"; Q (cf. above) has here: "The holy Spirit shall teach you." Christian experience may be presumed to speak

in Mt. 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I," but this is the only other passage. So we have only two sayings that are relevant, while of a true "Christ mysticism" there is not a trace.

In studying the influence of Old Testament prophecy on the presentation of the Gospel tradition, the total evidence may be made to assume large dimensions, but for our purposes this may be curtailed without detriment. There is certainly no point in citing the formal quotations made by Matthew with the familiar formula, "It came to pass that there might be fulfilled," etc., for these are explicitly due to the writer. Nor need we concern ourselves with quotations which are not presented as Messianic, even though we may think that the Evangelists understood them Messianically; the use of Isa. 6:9 f. in Mk. 4:12 is an instance. Passages whose form has been moulded in accordance with Old Testament models[1] have no immediate significance for our aims, while the highly prophetic coloring of the infancy chapters has its own special history. And it would be quite fruitless to cite such apocalyptic passages as Mk. 13:14's citation of Daniel; the apocalyptic use of the Old Testament was next to universal among the Jews, and in itself it has no possible bearing on Jesus' or the Christians' special claims.

We shall confine ourselves, consequently, to

[1] The number of such passages, however, is probably smaller than is often supposed.

the Old Testament quotations that belong to the earlier Synoptic tradition, and that have definite Christological value, particularly to those that purport to have been uttered by Jesus. In Q no such quotation can be identified.[1] In Mark we have four, all toward the end of the Gospel: Mk. 12:10 f., "The stone which the builders rejected," etc. (Ps. 118:22 f.); 12:36, the problem of Davidic descent (Ps. 110:1); 14:27, "I will smite the shepherd," etc. (Zech. 13:7); 14:62, Jesus' confession of his Messiahship (Dnl. 7:13, Ps. 110:1). Of these the first is undeniably difficult. It is awkwardly—almost harshly—appended to the Parable of the Vineyard, and it virtually involves a full and public Messianic claim; most students therefore treat it as a real intrusion of Christian apologetic.[2] The second passage is perfectly comprehensible as a saying of Jesus, whatever views may be held about his Messianic claims; it is concerned only with the nature of Messiahship in the abstract.[3] If Jesus did hold himself to be Messiah—or even if he held himself to be simply a leader with a Divine commission—there would be nothing strange about the Zechariah quotation in the face of approaching death. The possibility of the use of the Daniel passage depends naturally

[1] We may note, however, the "Wisdom of God" quotation, above.

[2] But no one would deny, of course, a use by Jesus of Ps. 118:22 f. in another sense or as part of his private teaching.

[3] This fact, together with the attack on the Davidic theory of Messiahship, makes an apostolic origin of the passage difficult to conceive.

on the presence of a Messianic consciousness, but this is the only difficulty; granted the consciousness, at such a time such a confession could have no other form. Consequently, apart from preconceptions about Jesus' Messiahship based on other evidence, the use of Ps. 118:22 f. in Mk. 12:10 f. is the only citation that can really raise questionings.

Matthew, contrary to what we might expect, adds nothing to the list, and contents himself with citing the Old Testament only on his own authority.[1]

In Luke we have the elaborate citation of Isa. 61:1 f. in Lk. 4:18 f., but without explicit Messianism. And Isa. 53:12 is quoted in Lk. 22:37: "That which was written must be fulfilled in me, 'And he was reckoned with the transgressors'; for that which concerneth me hath fulfilment." This very explicit appeal to prophecy is an advance on Mk. 14:27, and undoubtedly constitutes a problem. We may note, however, that it is the sole unambiguous Synoptic reference to the Isaianic Servant passages; a most significant fact, considering the importance of these passages to the earliest Christian apologetic.

Less direct is the identification of the Baptist with Elijah (Mal. 3:1, 4:5) in Lk. 7:27 = Mt. 11:10[2] and in Mk. 9:12 f. Its position in both Q and Mark is poorly adjusted to the con-

[1] Mt. 21:16 need be no more than a proverbial saying ultimately derived from Ps. 8:2.

[2] Q, despite the parallel in Mk. 1:2.

text, so that it was presumably an isolated saying. How it originated we cannot tell precisely. That it was of service to the first Christians is self-evident, but this does not prove that they created it; the Baptist had many disciples, the return of Elijah was confidently expected, and the two facts together made the identification inevitable even in non-Christian circles. Nor can we see any reason that would prevent Jesus himself from drawing—or accepting—the same conclusion. If he regarded himself as Messiah he would have been practically bound to do so.

Otherwise we have only various unspecified allusions to the Old Testament as a whole; e. g., Mk. 14:21, "For the Son of Man goeth, even as has been written of him"; Lk. 18:31, "All things that are written through the prophets shall be accomplished"; or Mt. 26:54, "How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled?" These permit little definite conclusion; the apocalyptic atmosphere made thoughts about the fulfilment of prophecy inescapable for every one, Jesus included. But, even if we should grant that all these passages[1] are apostolic, they show at least that the tradition was unwilling to put anything but the most indefinite language into his mouth. We may note further, with regard to the whole of this "prophetic" evidence, that practically all the citations are in connection with the passion story, the special object of early apologetic.

[1] Not only the three just cited.

There remain, however, two very important passages still to be mentioned. These are Lk. 24:27, "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself"; and Lk. 24:45, "Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures." Here the statement is made, as plainly as language can make it, that the formal defense of Christianity from the Old Testament is of post-resurrection origin. On occasion, no doubt, apostolic quotations might be referred back to Jesus, but the tradition was clear and unmistakable that his and the church's use of the Scriptures were two different things. And this conclusion is entirely corroborated by the direct evidence that we have accumulated.

In particular, a claim to be the Son of David is never placed in Jesus' mouth by any of the Synoptists; on the only occasion he is said to have raised the question (Mk. 12:35–37) he dismissed Davidic Messiahship as inadequate. Q does not mention the subject. In Mark we have only the outcry of Bartimæus[1] (10:47 f.); at the entry into Jerusalem (11:9 f.) we hear only of the "kingdom of David," not of the "Son of David." Luke has the Davidic concept only in his infancy chapters and in his genealogy, despite the importance of the theory in Acts. Matthew's infancy chapters (including the

[1] Not, indeed, rebuked by Jesus.

genealogy) likewise make much of it; Jesus is hailed as "David's Son" in 9:27, 15:22, 20:30 f. (taken from Mk. 10:47 f.), and 21:9, and the people speak of the Messiah under the title in 12:23. But even Matthew goes no farther; the term is used about Jesus but never by Jesus.

As regards other aspects of primitive Christology, Jesus nowhere in the Synoptists is made to claim omniscience. Luke and Matthew, of course, tend to modify Mark's frank statements that Jesus was "astonished," etc., but they are not consistent in their revisions and let words such as "Jesus marvelled at him" (Lk. 7:9 = Mt. 8:10) stand unaltered. And the only passage in the whole tradition that seems to make Jesus claim pre-existence is Lk. 4:43, "for therefore was I sent forth" (presumably "from heaven"), in place of Mark's (1:38) "for therefore came I out" (*i. e.*, "from Capernaum"). The fourth Gospel's drastic rewriting of the Synoptic Christology shows how archaic the latter had become by the end of the century, but it was almost equally archaic in Pauline circles some fifty years earlier. Consequently the absence of almost every trace of the more developed doctrine from the post-Pauline Synoptists is a powerful guarantee of their historic conscientiousness.

If any practice may be assumed to be primitively apostolic, it is exorcism in the name of Jesus. Yet this practice is described only in Mk.

9:38, Lk. 10:17, and the palpably late passage Mt. 7:22, and in none of these instances is Jesus' authority alleged. Even a general commission to exorcise, without specific mention of his name as the means, is attributed to him directly only in Mt. 10:8; in Mark's parallel (6:7 = Lk. 9:1) this commission is put into a prefatory note, while the statement that the disciples were successful is put into another note (Mk. 6:13). But in the earliest form of the mission charge (Q, represented by Lk. 10:1–11 in substance), the commission does not appear at all and the disciples are astonished by their success. To find a true reading back of apostolic practice we must wait for the supplement to Mark (Mk. 16:17).[1]

At the time the Synoptic Gospels were published there can be no question of the extent and intensity of sacramental feeling in Christianity, and such feeling extended far back into Palestinianism as well. Yet we find baptism mentioned only in Mt. 28:19 and Mk. 1:8. Moreover, of these two passages one is in the mouth of the risen Christ and is textually uncertain, while the other is spoken by the Baptist, is very far from being explicit, and treats of "Spirit," not "water," baptism. And, while all three Gospels describe Jesus' words and acts at the Last Supper, none of them give any ex-

[1] The injunction to heal the sick (Q, Lk. 10:9 = Mt. 10:8) covers a gift quite distinct from authority to exorcise.

press injunction that the rite should be continued,[1] nor do they explicitly refer to it elsewhere. That is, however much liturgical influence may have contributed to the form of various Gospel sections—particularly, no doubt, to the accounts of the miraculous feedings—its influence has been very subsidiary, and it has affected the tradition of Jesus' words only to the slightest degree.

When we come to the problem offered by Gentile converts, the importance of the subject warrants our citing the evidence rather fully. Here we may, as usual, note that the post-resurrection commands (Lk. 24:47 and Mt. 28:19) lie outside the proper limits of our subject, but in the tradition proper we encounter an explicit injunction to preach to the Gentiles (Mk. 13:10, elaborated in Mt. 24:14). This proves, however, to be a Markan enlargement of the saying in Mt. 10:18, "For a testimony to them and to the Gentiles," where "the Gentiles" comes in almost as an afterthought: in the (Palestinian) persecution opportunity will be given to warn a few Gentile officials, but nothing is promised regarding the conversion of even these. Mt. 10:18 has a Q basis, but a comparison of Mt. 10:17–20 with Lk. 12:11–12 shows that Q itself did not allude to the Gentiles at all.[2] In this instance we can actually see

[1] Taking for granted that the shorter text of Lk. 22:19 is original.

[2] Luke would never have omitted the reference if he had read it.

how a later concept came to be attributed to Jesus, and we can trace the successive stages of the development. But this has no parallel in the rest of the tradition.

In Q the most important passage is Lk. 13: 28 f. = Mt. 8:11 f. Matthew appends these verses to Jesus' praise of the faith exhibited by the centurion of Capernaum (Mt. 8:10), and the order he gives the wording, "Many shall come from the east and the west . . . but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth," makes it a definite prophecy of Jewish rejection in favor of the Gentiles. But in Luke this feature does not appear; there is no allusion to the Gentiles by name, and in place of "the sons of the kingdom" Luke has "yourselves." So in Luke verse 28 simply contrasts the pious Jews of the past with the present generation, while verse 29 is only a slight paraphrase of Isa. 49: 12: "Lo, these shall come from afar; and, lo, these from the north and the west; and these from the land of Sinim."[1] Consequently the passage in itself need teach nothing more than the conventional gathering of the Diaspora; that Luke (certainly) and the writer of Q (possibly) gave it a different interpretation is hardly to the purpose.

As regards other passages in Q, the story of the centurion and the praise given to Sheba's queen and the Ninevites (Lk. 11:31 f. = Mt. 12:41 f.) teach only that individual Gentiles

[1] Cf. also Ps. 107:3.

may have more faith than individual Jews, a lesson as old as the Book of Jonah. And the Baptist's warning (Lk. 3:8 = Mt. 3:9) against reliance on Abrahamic descent is a Jewish commonplace.

In Mark the story of the Syrophœnician woman (Mk. 7:24–30 = Mt. 15:21–28) is most prominent. But the lesson is even less pointed than in Q's account of the centurion; the woman's faith is simply said to be "great," and the story as a whole leaves the impression that Gentiles are actually inferior to Jews.[1] Otherwise in the second Gospel we have chiefly the Evangelist's own comments. He insists, in a phrase without grammatical relation to its context (Mk. 7:19*b*), that Jesus' teaching on true defilement resulted in making "all meats clean." He presumably wishes to emphasize that Jesus worked certain cures on Gentile soil (Mk. 5:1, 7:31, 8:22; cf. 8:1–10), but he does not refuse to record that on one occasion (5:17) the Gentiles drove Jesus back to the Jews. That "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country" (6:4) and "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations" (11:17; a quotation of Isa. 56:7) are polemical references to the Gentile mission may reasonably be doubted. So the only other relevant passage is 14:9 (= Mt. 26:13), "Wherever the Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world," an echo

[1] In verse 27 Mark (or some predecessor) may have added "first."

of 13:10, appended to a section which is complete without it.

In Luke (14:22 f.) we find an expansion of the Parable of the Supper, in which those "outside" the city in the highways and hedges are palpably the Gentiles, but, equally palpably, this is an addition of the Evangelist's own. At the close of the synagogue address in Lk. 4:16–30 the congregation are reminded that both Elijah and Elisha neglected Jews to minister to Gentiles; the people, enraged by this, attack Jesus, but he "passes through the midst of them." No doubt Luke took this scene as a forecast of the future of Christianity,[1] but he contents himself with this indirect allegory. "To be a light to lighten the Gentiles" in Lk. 2:32 is conventionally Jewish, especially in contrast to the following "and to be the glory of thy people Israel." If we add Luke's[2] interest in the Samaritans (10:33 and 17:16; cf. perhaps 9:55) we have about exhausted his evidence, for nothing convincing can be made out of his quotation of Isa. 40:5 (Lk. 3:6), of the fact that his genealogy goes back to Adam, of "Put out into the deep" in 5:4, of "eating and drinking such things as they give" in 10:7, or of the very difficult verse 16:16. And the "universalistic" readings in 2:10 and 2:14 are textual corruptions.

[1] As we are ignorant of the extent of Luke's revisions, we cannot tell how far the earlier L version shared the same conception.

[2] Or, more properly, L's.

In Matthew, apart from the passages already mentioned, the only relevant section is the account of the visit of the Magi, which, however, belongs to the special infancy traditions. Otherwise we have only two citations of Isaiah in 4:14–16 and 12:18–21; "Gentiles" is the key-word in both, but both are explicitly quoted by the Evangelist.

Summarizing: In the main body of the tradition we have only one passage (Mk. 13:10 = Mt. 24:14) that commends the Gentile mission in set terms, and only one passage (Mk. 14:9 = Mt. 26:13) that takes it definitely for granted. Everything else is indirect, the meaning being conveyed by small readjustments of the wording, by allegories, by vague hints, or by Old Testament quotations. When we remember how utterly important this question was to the church and when we remember, moreover, how anxious all three Synoptists were to justify the inclusion of Gentiles, the yield of our investigation is almost pitifully small. Evidently, those most ardently desirous of justifying a practice by the authority of Jesus felt obliged to respect the tradition as it was handed down. To Paul full Gentile liberty was a matter of life and death—but Paul made no attempt to call "Christ after the flesh" to his aid. He might "know and be persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean of itself" (Rom. 14:14, a quotation of the saying in Mk.

7:15), but farther than this he made no attempt to go.

Opposition to Gentiles is limited to a possible instance in Q and to four other passages in Matthew.[1] The first is Lk. 11:42*b* = Mt. 23:23*b*, "These[2] ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone."[3] But in Luke the clause is omitted by D and it may very well be a scribal addition to make Luke conform to Matthew. In any case, the words are impossible in Jesus' mouth, for they make "tithing mint, anise, and cummin" a real virtue after all.

Of the special Matthæan passages the most unambiguous is Mt. 23:2 f.: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe." It is needless to say that these two verses are contradicted by the rest of the chapter, which is a long warning against doing and observing what the Pharisees bid; and it is equally needless to say that a most vital part of Jesus' message was its attack on scribal and Pharisaic principles.[4] Consequently we can understand Mt. 23:2 f. only as an expression of the later Palestinian church, when a growing conservatism had made them "all zealous for the law" (Acts 21:20).

[1] These obviously belong to a stratum of earlier date than the finished Gospel.

[2] "Justice, mercy, and faith."

[3] "Tithing mint," etc.

[4] Not merely on scribal and Pharisaic *conduct*.

Very similar is Mt. 5:19: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." The secondary character of this verse has long been recognized. Not only does it break the context; its "two levels of salvation" doctrine is foreign to the teaching of Jesus, and it reflects a controversy that did not exist in his lifetime.[1] Then we have Mt. 10:5 f.: "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This saying may very well be authentic, for it certainly represents the only attitude Jesus could have taken during his lifetime;[2] but its preservation after the Gentile mission had begun must have a polemic point.

Finally, the promise to Peter in Mt. 16:18 f.: Peter's attitude should be normative for the church. Certain distinguished scholars, no

[1] The general sense is: There are two kinds of commandments in the Law, "greater" and "less." The latter may be disregarded—in theory as well as practice—without loss of salvation, but he who takes such an attitude will have a low place in the kingdom. So the ideal is to defend and keep all the commandments of every sort; *i. e.*, the Jewish Christian who defends and keeps both moral and ritual precepts will have a higher place than the Gentile who keeps only the former.

[2] The usual Jewish theory was that preparation for the coming kingdom must be confined to the Jews. After the kingdom had appeared, however, worthy Gentiles might be admitted to some share in it.

doubt, understand this as a protest against the Jewish rigorism of James and so make it part of the latest strain of the Gospel. But it is much more simply taken with the passages just cited as an appeal to the Apostle of the Circumcision in defense of Jewish customs. However, there are other puzzling elements in the two verses, which may even be affected by second-century textual corruptions.

Looking back over these passages, we observe that every one of them is simply superadded to the older tradition and is unrelated to the context; Mt. 10:5 is an exception, but this verse is probably authentic.

Our survey is now complete, and the tests we have applied all converge to a common conclusion. Where beliefs of the Synoptic period can be distinguished with certainty from the teachings of Jesus, we find the former most scantily supported by sayings placed in his mouth. Consequently we are well advanced toward solving the problem of the Synoptic perspective; as far as the sayings are concerned, at any rate, this perspective is genuine. The primary historic value of the Synoptists is not for their own age but for the tradition of the teachings of Jesus.

SAYINGS AND CURES

V

SAYINGS AND CURES

THE significance of the results reached in the last lecture should be fully realized. Our Synoptists, whatever may have been their precise personalities, were men of commanding position in their own communities. Their bare word must have possessed great authority. They wrote in the second Christian generation and so would have little to dread from contradiction by eye-witnesses, particularly in the Gentile circles where Mark and Luke worked. All were men of strong convictions about the nature of Christianity, and in their Gospels they had an ideal opportunity to propagate their opinions. And yet we can reconstruct the positions of the Evangelists only by minute critical analysis: we must take into consideration little notes introduced in odd half-verses, delicate shadings here and there, dexterous groupings of the material and similar esoteric clews, which can be detected only by the practised eye and interpreted only after long and arduous study. So penetrating a critic as F. C. Baur wofully misread the purpose of Mark, and even "general critical agreement" may mean nothing more than the mechanical repetition of a false conception; Werner, for instance, has recently

issued a powerful warning against taking the second Gospel's "Paulinism" too much for granted. And so we must realize that our Evangelists were profoundly respectful of the tradition which they received; if they had felt free to treat it as cavalierly as certain modern scholars assume, they would have boldly filled its gaps to suit themselves.

The very character of much of their material proves the same thing. Neither Mark nor his readers could have found various sections in his Gospel of immediate practical moment, for the problems raised were assuredly archaic in his day. Jesus' dismissal of fasting, for instance, could have had only historical interest, and Mark (or some predecessor) had added a note (Mk. 2:20) to explain that conditions had changed. We may conceive that in Mark's community there may have been recrudescences of a desire to revive Sabbath observance,[1] but his Sabbath stories would have played straight into such adversaries' hands, for Mk. 2:23–28 and 3:1–5 take the permanence of the Sabbath law for granted and question only the method of its observance. The very elaborate section on purity (Mk. 7:1–23) moves in Jewish technicalities, and Mark has to draw his moral by main force (verse 19*b*). And so on. From all such sections, no doubt, Mark's readers could gain important

[1] It appears even in the time of Ignatius of Antioch (Magnesians 9:1).

lessons, just as Christians of all times and all places have been able to gain such lessons. But the lessons could be gained only by indirect means; the controversies themselves already belonged to a bygone day and were couched in terms no longer familiar to the readers.

Our Synoptists were naturally aware of this; in their teaching activity they must have been called on perpetually to explain the significance of details in the tradition. But—and this is the point—they did not feel free to remove such details, for even Luke's "Gentilic" revision of Mark is very slight. It is not until the end of the century that we find the fourth Evangelist retelling the story in "modern" terms—and yet his Gospel, despite its infinitely greater timeliness, never displaced the other three; the church was too tenacious of its earlier memories. Still later attempts in the apocryphal Gospels, even when theologically unobjectionable, won only the most local and temporary recognition.

Nor have we any right to assume that in the pre-Synoptic days conditions were different, that in the first Palestinian church, where eye-witnesses were common, the communities felt free to create and remodel sayings to suit themselves. Such is, indeed, the opinion of various scholars. Wellhausen,[1] for instance, founded his argument on two main considerations, the silence of Mark and the community interest. Mark, he

[1] Cf. above, page 11.

held, "obviously" included everything he knew, so that non-Markan material is bound to be secondary; and the community interest—evident in many sayings—could not have existed until the community was organized. The former argument, however, has conspicuously failed to win adherents; at the best it is a pure assumption —and a most improbable one. And the second argument rests on a confusion between "community" and "group"; the Lord's Prayer was of course a community prayer in later days, but from this we have no right to deduce that Jesus could not have taught it to a group of his disciples; did he deal only with individuals separately?

But there are other and more positive considerations. It is easy enough to speak of the creation of sayings by a community, but the phrase is really meaningless. Communities do not create sayings; such creation comes from individuals and from individuals only. Communities may adopt and transmit sayings, and may modify and standardize them in transmission, but the sayings themselves must first exist. Moreover, we are not dealing with sayings in general, but with the sayings attributed to Jesus by our Synoptists. Since the year A. D. 70, at least, these sayings have been found inimitable; the fourth Evangelist alone achieved real success in enlarging the tradition, but his productions bear an unmistakable stamp that distinguishes them

sharply from the originals. If, then, we are to follow Wellhausen and Bultmann in dating most of the Synoptic discourse material within the generation from 30 to 70, we must make extraordinary assumptions regarding the ability and character of the Palestinian church. Either it contained a single individual from whom the sayings all proceeded, but whose name and very existence has disappeared from history—something well-nigh unthinkable—or else there were a number of gifted individuals all fired with the same superlative genius and all endowed with the same exquisite style—an even more difficult conception. We know nothing of creative personalities in the pre-Pauline church; James and Peter were devoted missionaries, but we have no shadow of evidence that they were anything more.

Nor are we really any better off if we adopt the theory of Bultmann, who holds that the majority of the sayings were evolved from a few central nuclei by a process of deduction and amplification. As a matter of fact, the constant maintenance of a supreme standard is almost as difficult in drawing a deduction as in creating a new saying *ex nihilo*. We have examples enough in all Christian literature—from the Synoptists themselves[1] to the present day—of moralizing deductions drawn from Jesus' words, and there is no need to labor the constant in-

[1] In their editorial notes, etc.

feriority of the former. Bultmann has rendered great service in his close analysis of the logical progress of thought in compact sayings groups, and has shown how a single "text" can be elaborated. But he tacitly takes for granted that such elaboration was never due to Jesus himself—an impossible axiom. And his description of the kernel sayings that are automatically prolific of their own kind is only rhetoric.

Moreover, there is a further difficulty. Even if we can believe that the earliest community contained individuals who could produce our sayings, we still have to reckon with a true function of the community in its corporate aspect—its censorship. This censorship, we see, admitted nothing to the tradition unless it reached the highest level, and so raises a new question for us to answer. Genius displays itself quite as truly in its ability to omit as in its ability to accept; whence did the Christian community gain its selective power? If we are to follow Wellhausen and Bultmann, we must hold that Jesus gave no systematic teaching but was able, none the less, to inspire his followers with the utmost moral and literary discrimination; so much so that when they came to draw up rules for themselves they adopted only the basic contents of the Synoptists. That is, Wellhausen and Bultmann canonize the entire Palestinian church![1]

[1] Cf. above, page 12. Dibelius extends this canonization to include the first generation of Gentile converts as well.

So through one extreme historical improbability after another we have been brought to a final historical impossibility. It is high time to beat a retreat. The less does not create the greater; it was the teaching of Jesus that produced the community and gave it its ideals, not the reverse. The sayings of Jesus in our Synoptists are what they are because they actually *are* sayings of Jesus. And they are homogeneous because, as a whole, they represent *only* the teachings of Jesus. We need make only one historical assumption: the eye-witnesses, within whose days the first collections were made, could remember what he said and exclude what he did not say. Why should this perfectly natural assumption be held impossible?

The existence and authority of such eye-witnesses is of course no conjecture, for we hear of them more or less throughout the entire New Testament; Paul labored under the continual reproach of not belonging to their number, and echoes of their teaching are heard down into the second century. Nor are their leaders anonymous; whatever may have been the exact relations between Jesus and the Twelve or between the Twelve and "all the apostles," the Twelve as specially chosen eye-witnesses[1] held the leading position in the Palestinian church, where as "ministers of the word" (Acts 6:4) they would

[1] The attempt to eliminate "the Twelve" from the text of I Cor. 15 : 5 rests on a very slender foundation.

inevitably control the tradition about Jesus' teaching.[1]

Moreover, the existence of an authoritative tradition is no conjecture. Paul alludes to it more than once. To the Corinthians he says, "I delivered to you that which I also received," and he assures his readers, "Whether it be I or they, so we preach and so ye believed."[2] His teaching about the Last Supper is likewise something that he delivered only as he had received it, as a tradition which originated in the facts themselves.[3] By this tradition he felt bound; remarriage after divorce is a matter he cannot discuss, for on this the Lord has given his ruling and the question is closed.[4] On other marriage questions Paul may state his own opinion, but even though he is persuaded that he "also has the Spirit of God" and that he has "obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy," his opinion must be very carefully distinguished from the Lord's "commandments."[5] No picture could be clearer. In place of a body of sayings such as Bultmann conceives, more or less indefinitely expansible according to occasion, the sayings Paul knows admit of no additions. Deductions

[1] As a matter of fact, the present critical tendency is to argue that their unique relation to Jesus in the Synoptists is read back from their authority in the early apostolic church.

[2] I Cor. 15 : 3, 11.

[3] In I Cor. 11 : 23 the Greek preposition used requires the translation, "I received from a tradition going back to the Lord," not "I received from the Lord directly."

[4] I Cor. 7 : 10.

[5] I Cor. 7 : 40, 25, 12.

may of course be drawn from them, and fresh revelations might be given at any time, but neither the deductions nor the fresh revelations were in the same sense "commandments of the Lord"; they might be divinely inspired, but they were not the utterances of Jesus. And Old Testament rules and current moral precepts, while highly useful, must have stood on a still lower plane.[1]

When Paul boasts that he did not receive his gospel from men[2] he uses "gospel" in a very different sense, about equivalent to what we call "Paulinism." And he is perfectly aware that this gospel is distinct from the original tradition, and that the latter was quite able to save men, even if they did not accept his own theology. He is anxious that his Roman readers should approve his teachings, but, even if they do not, they have already "become obedient from the heart to that pattern of teaching to which they were delivered"[3]; Paul, Apollos, and Cephas are only ministers and stewards.[4]

And so the evidence, indirect and direct, is conclusive: there was a tradition of Jesus' sayings which treated them with profound respect; the conditions of transmission were so good that we are bound to accept the sayings as a whole. We naturally do not mean that this guarantees

[1] Cf. above, page 39 f, 106. [2] Gal. 1 : 11 f. [3] Rom. 6 : 17.
[4] I Cor. 1 : 12; 4 : 1; cf. 3 : 10–15; 3 : 21–23; Phil. 1 : 18; 3 : 15, etc.

every verse and clause. But the primary criteria to detect foreign elements must be derived from the sayings themselves; such criteria assuredly must not be derived from outside considerations and—above all—they must not be derived from à priori theories of the course of early Christian history.

And so we are brought to our final question regarding the sayings: How did the elements in our collections appear in the actual teaching of Jesus?

In order to answer this we must remember the conditions of the ministry. From the beginning of Jesus' work until his departure from Galilee he was perpetually occupied with preaching and teaching; preaching in the synagogues and out of them, on the lake and on land; teaching publicly and privately, among friends and among enemies. Apart from occasional excursions outside of Galilean territory, he visited, presumably, the greater part of the cities and villages in the tetrarchy; we must think of hundreds of instructions delivered in dozens of places. So there must have been almost infinite repetition of material. How many times did he state the Golden Rule? How many times did he teach that God is anxious to answer prayer? How many times did he protest against legalism in the matter of oaths? Such questions are palpably futile. Certain of his words, of course, are bound up with concrete

incidents that could scarcely have occurred more than once—such as his reply to the Baptist's messengers—but the number of these in the sayings groups is surprisingly small. Generally speaking, no disciple who had been faithful in attendance throughout the ministry could have recalled on how many occasions or in what localities he had heard specific utterances.

Moreover, it is not to be supposed that Jesus delivered the same sayings invariably in the same wording. He often did so, no doubt. The crisp form of many of his sentences or the inimitable simplicity of most of the parables could hardly be altered without destroying the effect; these he must have used repeatedly. But there may well have been other sayings and other parables dealing with the same themes which he employed for variety's sake. And, even when identical forms were used, their grouping must have differed on different occasions; Jesus assuredly was not one of the travelling preachers who commit a discourse to memory for redelivery in each new place. Disciples, consequently, would usually remember only what we might call the "greatest common divisors" of his instructions; we should expect to find—as in fact we do find—no true sermons,[1] but sermon "texts," sermon headings, sermon summaries, and sermon illustrations (the parables). And we

[1] Despite doubt in certain quarters, Jesus' synagogue discourses must have been of some length.

should expect to find—as in fact we do find—versions of sayings that agree closely in substance but differ considerably in the wording;[1] whether these variations may or may not represent alternative forms that Jesus himself used is quite immaterial.

We may, however, make a further and highly probable supposition, that many of our sayings groups were taught the disciples verbatim by Jesus; such was the Rabbinic practice, and we must never forget that Jesus was habitually addressed as "Rabbi." Burney, indirectly, advanced this theory a long way to persuasiveness by his doctrine of the poem stanzas which Jesus composed, even though we cannot agree with Burney that regularity of poetic structure is always a proof of primitiveness.

This is about as far as present results can carry us. For the future, the best hope of advance lies in a close study of the sayings groups, in order to learn what we can of their primitive extent. The more closely we can determine the original units of which they are composed, the more closely we may able to arrive at the precise original form of the teaching of Jesus.

Turning now to the traditions outside of the sayings proper, it is our duty to recall that these traditions likewise—in so far as they come from the primitive community—come from men

[1] *I. e.*, the present Greek versions represent distinct Aramaic originals.

whose memories were keen, discriminating, and jealous. And yet there must have been a difference between the preservation of words and acts. For the guidance of the community substantial accuracy in the tradition of the sayings was vital; but the need for similar precision in reporting the details of Jesus' deeds might not seem so pressing. And that such was the case in the Synoptic period is evident from the Gospels themselves; while parallel versions of an incident differ little in the kernel sayings, divergence in other matters is much wider. Again, under the best conditions of clear recollection, the form chosen for adapting an incident to pedagogic ends necessarily involved a conventional element.[1] And, moreover, much of what was said above about Jesus' sayings is equally true of many of his acts; certain of them may have been repeated many times and no disciple could—or would attempt to—distinguish between the incidents on one occasion and similar incidents on another.

For example, let us take the scandal caused by Jesus' free association with sinners. Mark places this concretely at a banquet given by Levi (Mk. 2:15–17). Luke has two stories with the same moral, both from L: one tells of the woman who was a sinner (Lk. 7:36–50), and the other of the publican Zacchæus (Lk. 19:1–10). And in addition Luke fills his fifteenth chapter

[1] Above, page 66.

with a summary account of a similar controversy and with the three parables which formed Jesus' reply. Then in the sayings groups we find the subject treated in Lk. 7:29, 7:34 (= Mt. 11:19), 18:9–14, Mt. 21:28–32, with other allusions elsewhere.

In this list all the sources of the Gospels are represented. And so is likewise almost every possible variety of form: Mk. 2:15–17 is a minimal dialogue; Lk. 19:1–10 a dialogue with narrative details; Lk. 7:34 is a sentence from a sayings group; Lk. 7:29 an early editorial note; Lk. 18:9–14 is a parable; Lk. 15 a parable group with introduction; Mt. 21:28–32 a parable with didactic supplement; Lk. 7:36–50 an elaborate structure containing narrative, dialogue, and a parable. Evidently the charge that Jesus was careless about the company he kept was one levelled against him constantly and one with which he dealt repeatedly.

Now when the three concrete stories are examined (Mk. 2:15–17, Lk. 7:36–50, 19:1–10), it will be seen that the kernel logia may be transferred from one to another or replaced by others from the sayings groups without harming either the lesson or the literary effect. To the questioners in Mark Jesus could reply crushingly with "These also are sons of Abraham"; the Markan answer leaves nothing to be desired when placed in the Zacchæus scene, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son would have

been an all-sufficient rejoinder to the scrupulous Pharisee in Lk. 7:39.[1] Consequently we are justified in asking: Did Jesus on every occasion he was reproved for associating with the ostracized classes reply with a different saying or parable—sayings and parables which, moreover, were always interchangeable? This question supplies its own answer.

We find similar phenomena in the Sabbath healings. Here again Mark has one (Mk. 3:1–6), while Luke has taken two from L (Lk. 13:10–17, 14:1–6). In Mark Jesus heals a man with a withered hand, asking simply: "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day?" etc. In Luke's first instance a woman "bowed together" is relieved, and the question is: "Doth not each of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall?" In his fourteenth chapter we have a dropsical man, while the argument is drawn from the recognized legality of rescuing "a son or an ox" from a pit. In all three stories the logia are again freely interchangeable; as a matter of fact Matthew has introduced the second Lukan logion into Mark's story.[2]

Now, supposing for the moment that in these scenes the details have been accurately transmitted, it is yet more than possible that on each

[1] In Lk. 7:44–46 the equation of one debtor to the Pharisee is redactorial.

[2] Mt. 12:11 f.; the animal appearing as a "sheep."

occasion Jesus expanded his teaching, not confining himself to a single logion or parable. But for the pedagogic purposes of the community a single saying in each dialogue was usually enough, and so a selection was made; if the selections had been made differently, we might actually have had the logia interchanged. In this sense even the most conservative student may be content to describe the scenes as "typical" rather than as rigidly "historical."

But of course the problems we have raised go deeper. How far are the whole scenes what Bultmann calls "ideal," resting on no true basis of recollection, but created only to give vividness to the sayings they enclose? This is a very real question. But in the case of the Sabbath healings, at all events, such a theory is impossible, for the sayings by themselves are incomplete; the important fact was that Jesus *acted* on his theory. Sabbath healing as such could never have been a community problem, and Christians were not interested in the question as a guide to their own practice;[1] otherwise we should have to make strange assumptions regarding the prevalence and power of early gifts of healing. Consequently, words of Jesus teaching the lawfulness of Sabbath healing are not found in the sayings groups; the interest of the community in transmitting such stories was his-

[1] Except perhaps indirectly, in so far as deductions from "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" might extend.

torical, and lay in the cures that *Jesus* worked and in the antagonisms that *he* aroused. So from the very beginning these events must have been related invariably in the dialogue-miracle form.

Details may of course have been altered as the stories were retold. So it may be argued plausibly that the stories in Mark and Lk. 14 are doublets; differences in the logia might occur as was suggested above, a change in the logion might make a change in the ailment seem necessary, and the transfer from a synagogue to a Pharisee's house would be easy. Yet, naturally, nothing can be proved in this way. Moreover, while Sabbath healing could not have been common in Jesus' ministry, yet he regarded the principle involved as fundamental, and a unique Sabbath cure is altogether unlikely. And, after all, Mark and L are independent witnesses.

When we return to the stories of Jesus' reception of sinners, however, we face a more complex problem, for here a community principle was really involved; the disciples like their Master labored for the conversion of outcasts, and justified their practice by his sayings and examples. So, for instance, in Lk. 15:1–2: "All the publicans and sinners were drawing near to hear him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." Now no one will take these two verses to be anything by a generaliza-

tion, or, if one prefers, an "ideal" scene. And they differ from Mk. 2:15 f. only in that Mark assigns the reproach to a concrete occasion, when Jesus was actually eating with sinners at a banquet given by Levi. That such a banquet actually took place no one need doubt, nor that Jesus caused scandal by attending it; but neither fact is of particular historic importance. At the best Mark gives us only one instance of the statement of a general principle, which was certainly not raised then for the first or the last time.

The two stories from L (Lk. 7:36–50, 19:1–10) stand, however, on a different footing. There is no reason to suspect them of being doublets of Markan sections. Mk. 14:3–9 and Lk. 7:36–50 have virtually nothing in common, especially when the Evangelists' own notes have been removed, while Mk. 2:14 and Lk. 19:1–10 agree only in the fact that Jesus eats with a publican. There is no element in the story of the repentant woman that contradicts historical probability, and no trace in verses 36–43 (L's form) of editorial elaboration. The account of Zacchæus is similarly straightforward and leaves unexplained only his recognition by Jesus. And, in the words of Wellhausen:[1] "To interpret Bartimæus of Jericho as 'son of the unclean,' and Zacchæus of Jericho as 'son of the clean' is to make one's self ridiculous."

[1] On Mk. 10:46.

In other words, the explanation of dialogues as "ideal scenes" must be tested in every individual case. When the logion involved is of very general application and the setting is colorless, there may be a certain probability. Mark, for instance, in 8:34–38 makes Jesus call a "multitude"—which has somehow mysteriously followed him into the region of Cæsarea Philippi—for the purpose of instructing it in the sacrifices incidental on discipleship; here we need no great critical acumen to realize that Mark uses this crowd to symbolize the Christians of his own day.[1] But when the logia deal with concrete situations and are not explicable apart from them, the probability is all the other way. We cannot think of the cleansing of the Temple as in any way "ideal," except in so far as the incidents may have been abbreviated. Nor of the question about the tribute-money; this discussion could not have occurred in Galilee, for the Galileans were subjects of a "federated" state and so paid no direct tax to Rome; the controversy was possible only in Jerusalem —where Mark places it—and from its nature could scarcely have happened twice. So, in the future, each dialogue must be studied separately, with such criteria in mind. We shall raise many questions that we may not be able to answer—but at least we are learning what questions to ask.

[1] The sayings, incidentally, are from Q.

We may add one further observation. To repeat a conclusion reached earlier in our investigation,[1] the tradition which formed and transmitted the dialogues insisted that concrete problems were always to be solved by reference to general principles. We may be quite willing to admit that on occasion the generalization may be due to the community; in a situation such as Mk. 3:35 Jesus might very well take understanding of the principle for granted.[2] If so, this tendency on the community's part is a brilliant proof of Jesus' pedagogic success, for the reference of concrete questions to the broadest general standards was of the very essence of his teaching; here he broke decisively with Jewish casuistry. And that his disciples learned this lesson is proved by the whole New Testament; it was the recognition of his doctrine that problems are to be solved by a few basic principles—or by the single basic principle of love—that gave early Christian ethic its flexibility and its power. On the other hand, the very universality of the acceptance of this method shows that most of the generalizations should be attributed to Jesus himself.

With the subject of the Sabbath healings we have impinged on the cures in general. And here we have seen[3] that these stories contain two distinct motives that struggle, so to speak, for mastery, the power of Jesus and the power of the sufferers' faith. To illustrate, we may com-

[1] Above, page 66. [2] Above, page 36. [3] Above, page 68

pare the Markan and the Lukan versions of the cure of the woman with an issue (Mk. 5:25–34, Lk. 8:43–48). Underlying Mark can be seen the account of what can best be described in Jesus' own words—"Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole"—as a faith-cure; Mark states, no doubt, that "Jesus perceived in himself that power had gone forth from him," but this is a comment of the narrator[1] and presumably rests on a deduction from the facts. But in Luke (verse 46) this declaration is put in Jesus' mouth; the miracle is now explicitly made due to a quasi-physical "holiness" that resided in Jesus' person and was communicable to others by the touch of his garments.[2] Here there is an entire transformation of the method of healing; Luke (verse 48) retains the words about the woman's faith but this ceases to be the centre of the story. A somewhat similar general heightening by the later Evangelists of the details of the Markan miracles[3] is familiar to every Synoptic student, and attention was always called to the tendency by the older "liberal" critics.[4] And the deduction to be drawn is clear enough.

[1] It is probably older than Mark.

[2] Cf. Acts 5 : 15, 19 : 12. Curiously enough, in Matthew's version of the story above only the faith motive appears. There is some real Synoptic evidence that Mark's narrative depends on an earlier (Q?) tradition, to which Matthew may have returned. Or Matthew may have (unconsciously?) reached the same result merely by abbreviating Mark.

[3] It is not of course maintained that Mark himself is always primitive.

[4] The newer school have a different theory; cf. below, page 145.

In the earlier strata of the Synoptists the description of the cures is often in utter disaccord with the theories of the non-Christian tales; the faith motive is foreign to the contemporary "form." Moreover, the tendency of this motive to disappear from the Christian tradition shows that it was not created by community interests;[1] the emphasis on faith as a prerequisite in healing goes back to Jesus himself. Granting, as he himself asserts,[2] that some of his cures were indistinguishable from those of other healers, those that were truly characteristic of him rested on an element unknown elsewhere.

But this is not the only defect of form-criticism as applied to the cures. Even if we should find that the very earliest version of a story had all the contemporary characteristics, this fact tells us nothing at all about the truth or falsity of the facts related. The story may have omitted historic details in order to accord with the "form," but such details as it gives may be meticulously accurate. It is part of the "form"[3] when we are told that the woman with an issue "had suffered many things of many physicians and was nothing bettered" (Mk. 5:26), but the history of psychotherapy abounds in the relief

[1] This is overlooked, *e. g.*, by Bultmann, when he writes (page 131): "The mention of the faith (in Mk. 2 : 5) great enough to rise above external difficulties is naturally meant to reflect glory on the miracle-worker who deserves such faith." This is true enough, but it explains the preservation, not the creation, of the motive.

[2] Lk. 11 : 19 = Mt. 12 : 27.

[3] See page 67.

of just such cases. It is part of the "form" when we are told that Jesus healed a deaf-and-dumb man by taking him aside, touching his tongue with spittle, "sighing," and saying "Ephphatha" in Aramaic (Mk. 7:32–36), and parallels are abundant. But, when we have said all this, we have in no way proved that on occasion Jesus did not heal by employing precisely these means; even if he himself did not share in the popular conceptions, he might use familiar ritual to help a patient's faith. It is part of the "form" when we are told that the cures were instantaneous, but such cures generally are instantaneous; it may be noted, however, that in Mk. 8:22–25 two efforts were required.[1] And finally, that many cures were complete and well attested surely needs no discussion. Nor need we even say that the omission of the faith motive in some miracles is unhistoric; a noisy "demoniac," for instance, can be silenced only by the means described in Mk. 1:25, and a demand for faith would be entirely out of place.

What form-critics forget in their treatment of the healing miracles is that such stories, whether within or without Christianity, are based on common occurrences. Every religion has its cures that actually take place; a record accurately kept at (say) a shrine of Æsculapius would abound in perfect examples of the typical "form"—and would none the less be perfectly

[1] Something carefully ignored by the later Evangelists.

true. And so the value of form-criticism in examining such stories is practically negligible.

This naturally does not mean that our tradition can tell us what took place at any given healing. Cures, like sayings and dialogues, may be typical—composite photographs, as it were, of a number of similar instances.[1] But, even if we could trust every detail in an account, the best first-century eye-witnesses might omit the features essential for a real understanding of a case. The rationalization of miracles is no modern thing; says Philostratus (around the year 217 of our era), after describing how Apollonius of Tyana raised a girl from the dead: "Whether he found a spark of life in her, which those that had been caring for her had missed—for it was said that a vapor went up from her face despite rain at the time—or whether life had departed and he restored it by his warm touch, is a problem beyond my power and the power of those who were present at the time."[2] But about the cures which Jesus wrought we do not know enough even to rationalize them. From any standpoint, in such cures the personality of the healer is of the utmost importance; how do we know what was or was not possible in the presence of the personality of Jesus?

[1] Mt. 15 : 29–31, *e. g.* [2] *Apollonius*, iv, 45.

LEGENDS AND MYTHS

VI

LEGENDS AND MYTHS

WE are at last ready to consider the presence of legendary and mythical elements in the Synoptic tradition.[1] And, long before the rise of form-criticism as a method, it was recognized in all but the most theologically conservative circles that there are certain sections we can scarcely escape classifying as "legendary."

The most unambiguous instances are grouped in what is generally admitted to be the latest Synoptic stratum, the special narrative material in Matthew. "The earth did quake, and the rocks were rent, and the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many" (Mt. 27:51 ff.). How can we read this except as a "legend of portents,"[2] based on conventional apocalyptic themes?[3] Matthew's account of the

[1] From the following discussion must be excluded the very special problems offered by the birth stories.

[2] The Easter experiences may have led some of the disciples to believe they had seen Old Testament saints as well; but there is some real evidence that we should read "after *their* resurrection" in place of "*his* resurrection."

[3] When Bultmann (page 172) suggests a Hellenistic origin he is overlooking the obvious.

guard at the sepulchre, with its familiar difficulties, is of the essence of apologetic legend. Peter's miraculous catch of a fish with a stater already in its mouth (Mt. 17:24–27) is a didactic legend; it teaches the Christian propriety of meeting secular dues. The story of the same Peter's attempt to walk on the water (Mt. 14: 28–31) conveys an exquisite allegory whose meaning is inescapable, but to the Evangelist the allegory has hardened into fact—*i. e.*, into legend. And the dream of Pilate's wife (Mt. 27:19), the story of how the procurator washed his hands (Mt. 27:24), or the account of Judas's death (Mt. 27:3–10) are according to every probability legends likewise.

Outside of Matthew we have from L the story of the ten lepers (Lk. 17:11–19), with a telling religious moral, the call of Peter (Lk. 5:1–11), which has been expanded with admixtures from a resurrection tradition, and the account of Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (Lk. 4: 16–30), into which there has been worked a general programme of his ministry. But in all the above cases, Matthæan and Lukan alike and even where the legendary element is most extreme, the legend has been elaborated out of motives already present in Christian tradition, never by the mere appropriation of a non-Christian story.[1] And if the later sources were protected so carefully against contamination, we

[1] The apocalyptic in Mt. 27:51 ff. was of course an integral part of early Christian thinking, whatever its eventual origin.

surely have no right to think that the earlier teaching would be more careless.

When we turn to Mark, however, we meet one narrative that impresses most students as thoroughly legendary, the account of the death of the Baptist (Mk. 6:17–29). Its difficulties are notorious, and a harmonization with Josephus's data (especially *Antiquities* XVIII, v) is almost—or quite[1]—impossible. If we found this story anywhere but in the Gospels we should class it as a folk-tale; a perfect example of the type that loves to embroider the evil deeds of hated rulers. But the essential feature for our notice is that this story is not part of the Synoptic tradition at all. It is found, to be sure, in a Synoptic Gospel, but it has nothing directly to do with Jesus, and so could not have been transmitted through the ordinary Synoptic channels. It is a current tale, most effectively told[2] and no doubt widely circulated; Mark picked it up and used it to fill the interval between the departure of the Twelve (Mk. 6:12 f.) and their return (Mk. 6:30). Matthew (14:3–12) reduces it to about half Mark's length, while Luke omits it altogether.

Of other legendary sections in Mark the most evident is the cursing of the fig-tree (Mk. 11:12–14, 20–25), which is, however, a palpable

[1] How can Herod's birthday banquet be transferred to the remote and gloomy fortress of Machærus, where the Baptist was imprisoned?

[2] Its effectiveness has led to further elaboration down to the present day; the Salome literature has a history all its own.

allegory; its basis is perhaps the precise parable appearing in Lk. 13:6–9, aided conceivably by local stories about some tree near Jerusalem.[1] The motives in the accounts of the miraculous feedings are complicated, but liturgical considerations presumably played the greatest part; it will be remembered, though, that Wellhausen declined to mistrust anything in these stories except the large numbers.[2] Otherwise, setting aside the transfiguration for the moment, the older "liberal" scholars generally limited their acknowledgments of legendary matter to single verses[3] or to the embellishment of the miracles. And they were accustomed to point out that, in contrast to Luke and Matthew, the amount of such embellishment in Mark is comparatively small.

For instance, they would explain such a passage as Mk. 1:29–39 about as follows. When Jesus entered Peter's house he was "told" about the illness of the latter's mother-in-law as a natural piece of information, without expecting that he could help her; so far he had healed no sick people.[4] The cure, consequently, took them all by surprise, and the news spread with inevitable rapidity. So, as soon as sunset put an end to the Sabbath, the house was besieged with

[1] If this is true, we may have a real borrowing of a non-Christian theme, although in a very subsidiary place.

[2] *Mark*, 2d ed., page 50.

[3] Such as Mk. 15:38.

[4] The popular conceptions, which Mark shared, distinguished between the expulsion of demons (Mk. 1:25) and the relief of disease. Cf. page 101, foot-note.

a throng bringing sufferers of all sorts. But Mark does not describe Jesus' powers as uncircumscribed; he says that they brought "all," but only "many" were healed. The next day would have seen a multiplication of the importunity, had not Jesus escaped from the city before daylight; he was discovered by his disciples somewhere in the vicinity, engaged in prayer. The message of his popularity failed to induce him to return, and he replied: "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns that I may preach there also, for for this purpose I left [Capernaum]." Here "preach" was taken as the emphatic word[1]—"to preach, and not to heal"—and Jesus' prayer was explained as due to the tension between the popular demands and his sense of duty.

Noting, moreover, such "eye-witness" touches as the irrelevant list of names in verse 29 and the vivid description of the crowds in verse 33, this section was taken to represent first-hand testimony of the most objective character; Johannes Weiss, indeed, went so far as to point out that the language may readily be turned into the first person, and to maintain that we have here a virtual transcript of Peter's own words.[2]

When compared with Mark, the influence of legendary elaboration is unmistakable in Matthew (8:14–17) and Luke (4:38–43). In

[1] In the Greek it has an emphatic position.

[2] Omitting, of course, Mark's characteristic note at the end of verse 34.

Luke the woman's fever has become "great" and they "beseech" Jesus for her, taking his power for granted. In Matthew Jesus himself assumes the initiative, without waiting to be asked, and his physical contact with the patient is reduced to a mere touch of the hand; in Luke there is no contact at all. In Matthew, moreover, the woman's "ministry" is confined to Jesus alone, while Mark makes it embrace the whole company.

When describing the cures after sunset both the later Evangelists insist that he healed "all" the sick; Luke, to be sure, retains Mark's "many" in speaking of the demoniacs, but he rewords the passage so as to suggest there were no others. At this point Matthew breaks off with one of his Old Testament quotations, which clinches the apologetic value of the narrative. Luke continues Mark's story, but in a very different sense. Since "all" the sufferers had been relieved, there was no longer any conflict of duties for Jesus, and so both his escape by night and his prayer disappear. So he leaves Capernaum by daylight, gently resisting the efforts of the grateful multitude to detain him, and explaining that the other cities also must hear his message of "the good tidings of the kingdom of God." And he adds, "For therefore was I sent"; certainly with the meaning "sent into the world," and probably "from heaven."[1]

[1] Above, page 100.

This contrast between Mark and the later Evangelists was used regularly by the "liberals" as an object-lesson in the growth of legend around a historic account. But the newer school will have none of it; they insist that there is no real contrast, and that Mark must be interpreted in the sense of Luke and Matthew. So Klostermann in his second edition: To take "tell" in verse 30 of Mark as meaning anything but "request" is false; the pleonastic note of time in verse 32 has a parallel in Poimandres; there is no contrast between "all" and "many" in verses 32–34; the departure from Capernaum is not meant as an escape from entanglement in healing; there is no contrast in verse 38 between "preaching" and "healing"; in the same verse "came out" must be understood to mean "was sent forth" as in Luke—even though "came out" simply repeats the verb used in verse 35, yet no allusion to verse 35 is possible. Klostermann adds that the hurried escape before dawn was designed solely to give Jesus an opportunity to pray, although he does not try to explain why a prayer should be thought appropriate at this point. In other words, Klostermann believes that the legend is already full-blown in Mark, and that search for a historic basis is superfluous.

Now there is probably no reason to quarrel with Klostermann, if he means that Mark, whose Christology was highly developed, un-

derstood his own narrative more or less in the Lukan sense. But if he means that Mark's narrative by itself expresses any such sense, then we must dissent entirely; no one could extract Luke's meaning from Mark without reading Luke first. And so, in emphasizing Mark's probable point of view, Klostermann has unconsciously succeeded in emphasizing something else: if Mark uses a phraseology that does not bear a full Markan sense, we must believe that Mark inherited this phraseology from an earlier stage of tradition. When we observe how this passage bears none of the characteristics of Mark's usual remodelling, how it is unafraid to suggest that Jesus' power to heal was limited, how it represents him as seeking aid in prayer at a time of perplexity, and—above all—how it treats healing as inferior to preaching, we can scarcely help agreeing that the "liberals" were right after all; the passage really does represent authentic eye-witness testimony, and may well be referred to Peter himself as the final source.

That every section in Mark should have equally good support is naturally out of the question. And yet that the Evangelist had access to thoroughly reliable sources is clear in this case, as is the fact that he could respect his sources, even when they did not express his own point of view. So in the study of any Markan passage a similar possibility must always be

borne in mind; we can never have the right to dismiss the Evangelist's statements out of hand, and the assumption must always be that true recollection is possible until the contrary is proved.

Of course, even when we convince ourselves that Mark is reproducing a good tradition, there are instances where we cannot reconstruct the actual happenings. But we might be in no better case could we have examined the spectators on the day of the events. Suppose, for instance, that the "liberal" interpretation of the stilling of the tempest (Mk. 4:35–41) is correct; *i. e.*, that Jesus urged supreme faith at a moment of danger, and that the storm then subsided abruptly—as storms on the Sea of Galilee often do. Yet by the time the boat reached the land the disciples might already have convinced themselves that the "Peace, be still!" was directed not to them but to the obedient elements; if so, our "legend" might be complete in a few hours. Yet, plausible as this explanation is, we cannot of course assert that it is true. We must content ourselves with the principle set forth in Doctor Rawlinson's wise words:[1] "Mark is writing from thirty to forty years after the events in question, and the stories no doubt had been told and retold in the interval times without number. Their precise historical basis, whatever it may have been, is now irre-

[1] *St. Mark*, page 60.

coverable." Even though we may demur a bit to the implications of "told and retold times without number"—such retelling need not imply deviation—yet we must acknowledge the justice of the principle involved. But the confession of our inability to ascertain the facts is one thing; a refusal to admit that there ever could have been any facts is quite another. In particular, to hold that the presence of legendary elements in a Synoptic passage absolves us from further investigation is to bid farewell to historical method; all the very real gratitude we owe to Wellhausen and the others must not blind us to this.

With this caution in mind, we may examine specific passages which the newer school dismisses as mere folk-tales more or less fortuitously attached to Jesus. The most conspicuous instance is the story of the Gergesene demoniacs (Mk. 5:1–20). As has already been explained,[1] two chief "popular" motives are found here: (*a*) the stupidity of the demons, who accomplish their own destruction, and (*b*) the punishment of Gentiles for keeping swine. And there are minor folk-themes, such as the gregarious habits of demons; we might add the unwillingness of such beings to disclose their names, but this touch may be due to the Evangelist.[2] But motive (*b*), if it really exists, must have entirely escaped Mark's knowledge, for the essential

[1] Page 12. [2] Verse 9 is very awkward after verse 8.

purity of all foods and the Gentiles' full right to share in the Gospel were vital parts of his teaching.[1] Moreover, on any reading of the evidence, the prayer of the Gentiles that Jesus should "depart from their borders" (verse 17) is inconsistent with Mark's theory as a whole and with his conception of Jesus' ministry in 7:24–8:26. Consequently the story—which is obviously Palestinian—must have appeared in Christian tradition at so early a date that Mark no longer knew what it meant; this "current folk-tale" was associated with Jesus and was taken into the main channel of the Synoptic stream when and where the eye-witness testimony was at its very strongest. Perhaps such an assumption is not quite impossible; but that it is extremely difficult no one will deny.

But why need we make such an assumption? What proof is there that the folk-motives really explain the section? As we have just seen, Mark missed one of these motives altogether; may he not have missed it because it did not exist? And the other principal motive has little consequence. Moreover, the "liberal" reading is wholly possible. Delusions of the insane are always expressed in the language of their own time, and where faith in the reality of demoniac possession is active unfortunate sufferers often declare that they are inhabited by evil spirits. Either the modern *Khersa* or *es-Samrah* gives a satisfac-

[1] Mk. 7:19, 13:10.

tory identification for Gergesa[1] and satisfies the topographical indications. The recognition of Jesus by the demoniac in verses 6–7 is a conventional Markan addition[2] to the original story, and hence needs no further explanation. Of course, even if we should succeed in demonstrating in this way that the story has a good historic basis, we are still confronted with a tale containing a minimum of apologetic value; the fact that Jesus succeeded in curing a violent maniac—and in the process terrified a herd of swine—may be picturesque, but it is very little more. But with apologetic values or the reverse the historian has nothing to do; his business is solely with the facts, be they never so unedifying. Yet we may wonder a little if the utterly "first-century" character of this particular story has not something to do with modern scholars' extreme willingness to discard it.

The second passage is the account of Jesus' baptism (Mk. 1:9-11). Gunkel's folk-lore theory was explained in the second lecture,[3] and his conclusions were adopted and elaborated by Bultmann.[4] As the essential feature is that the descent of the Dove was visible to every one—or at least to the Baptist—Gunkel argues that the Johannine account is the most primitive, and Bultmann that Mark must be read in the

[1] "Gadara" and "Gerasa" (both impossible localities for the scene) are due to substitution of known names for unknown.

[2] Cf. Mk. 1:24, 1:34, 9:20.

[3] Page 43.

[4] Pages 151 ff.

Johannine sense; the subject of "saw" in Mk. 1: 10 is not Jesus but the Baptist. This last argument, however, is impossible. Mark cannot be read in any such sense; it is wholly arbitrary to suppose that the subject changes in verses 9–10,[1] and the words of the Voice in verse 11 are addressed to Jesus, not to John. Gunkel,[2] who observed this difficulty, wished consequently to read the Matthæan form of the Voice's words, "This is my son," not "Thou art my son" as in Mark; on this see below.

The first thing that impresses us when we study these arguments is Gunkel's and Bultmann's lack of balance in their willingness to make assumptions. They refuse to admit that the Jews could have thought of the dove (or any bird) as a symbol of the Spirit, because such symbolism is probably not found in the Old Testament (Gen. 1: 2?) and only vaguely in the Rabbinic literature. On the other hand, however, they have no hesitation in believing that the same Jews were very familiar with the tale of a bird's pointing out a king, although for the existence of such a tale in Palestine there is no evidence whatsoever. But this is a minor matter. What we find totally incomprehensible in the theory is its readiness to throw all Gospel criticism to the winds; it takes as primitive the evidence of John and of a wording peculiar to Mat-

1 "John" occurs in verse 9 only as a genitive of the agent.
2 Page 150.

thew or, in other words, reverses everything we know about method. If we can argue in this way, we might just as well discontinue the study of the Synoptic problem altogether, burn our books, and go back to the good old days when a man could quote from any part of any Gospel as might seem good in his own eyes.

But let us ask a further question. Let us assume that the oldest Christian form of the story is as Gunkel reconstructs it; that it told of the public recognition of Jesus by the Baptist and the crowds, of the testimony by a heavenly Voice heard by all, and of the Baptist's act of humble reverence. Then why in all the world was this wonderful attestation stripped off? Why did the Baptist's acknowledgment disappear? Why did recognition by the crowds disappear? How did the objective third person in the Voice's words become changed to the subjective second person? And why does Mark read "he saw" in place of the assumed universal "they saw"?

Whatever defects the older "liberal" criticism may have had, it could—and can—give a comprehensible explanation of how John's version developed out of Mark's. But the newer criticism has made no attempt to solve the problem it has raised, to explain how Mark's version developed out of John's. Indeed, the upholders of the folk-lore theory do not seem conscious that a problem exists—unless Bultmann's attempt to force a Johannine sense on Mark is evidence of such a consciousness. But let us at-

tempt to put ourselves in their place, and see if we can arrive at any explanation from their standpoint. We might argue thus: after the assumed story entered the Christian tradition, it was attacked in many quarters as untrue to fact. And so a compromise was reached; the more obviously impossible features were deleted, and the event was turned into a subjective psychological experience on Jesus' part. In this form Mark was contented to use the tradition, but the popularity of the tale was so great that it reverted to its old form in the later Evangelists.

This seems to be the only possible argument, yet it is anything but helpful. It involves assuming precisely what the newer critics refuse to admit, that the tradition was or could be controlled by persons who knew the facts. And, what is worse, it involves assuming that the first Christians were capable of deliberately transmuting objectivity into the terms of psychological experience, an utterly incredible assumption. Consequently the newer method must in this instance be convicted of inability to explain the facts; the first tradition of Jesus' baptism and the folk-lore tales have nothing to do with each other.

Now, everything that has just been said of the baptism story applies with even greater force to the narrative of Jesus' temptation. Here I may be allowed to quote from myself:[1] "The perfect naturalness of the narrative is inimitable;

[1] *St. Luke*, page 49.

exaltation on discovery of the Messianic vocation, retreat into solitude without a thought of care for the body, waning of the ecstasy, and resultant hunger and depression, which gave a fit moment for the intrusion of diabolic suggestion. And the temptations exactly summarize the Ministry. They exhibit the refusal to take thought for self, or to accede to demands for a sign, or to seek popularity through lowering the moral standard. The hypothesis of a secondary origin for these verses seems excluded. It would necessitate an editor who could abstract these principles from the mass of detailed events, recognize them as temptations, reclothe them in the concrete form of this section, give the whole an accurate psychological background, and (by no means least difficult) abstain from explanatory moralizing. Such a task was beyond the powers of any one in the apostolic or post-apostolic age."

So, when we consider the baptism and temptation narratives together, we are brought to a conclusion of the widest possible import: these two stories must go back to Jesus himself; they must represent the account of his own experiences as he told them to his first disciples.[1] That the Synoptists do not represent him as giving such an account has no bearing on the case. If we have learned anything from our study of the Gospel forms, it is that a story told at second

[1] Cf. Albertz, who sums up his elaborate investigation of the temptation tradition in the words: "The artist who told this must be sought in Jesus himself" (page 48).

hand would be inconceivable in the tradition; the facts are invariably related directly.[1]

An appropriate occasion for Jesus' disclosure of his experience would be after Peter's confession, as is seen when we penetrate beneath the surface of Mark. The Evangelist, as every one knows, was apprehensive lest the first confession of Jesus' Messiahship[2] be thought a final definition of the nature of Christ, and he did everything in his power to point out the inadequacy of the formula framed by Peter.[3] So he prefaced it with a denunciation of the disciples' blindness (Mk. 8:14–21), a blindness which only a miracle could cure (8:22–26), and followed it with a bitter lamentation over their lack of faith (9:19). The confession itself is received almost indifferently, and Jesus proceeds at once to explain that he is Messiah only as the suffering but triumphant Son of Man—to the scandal of Peter. Then a mysterious crowd[4] is summoned to receive the lesson of the Way of the Cross. And the transfiguration translates Messianism completely into heavenly terms—with a final reference to Peter's inability to understand. We cannot stop here to analyze the material that Mark has assembled around the central fact, nor

[1] In Acts 11:4–17, no doubt, Peter describes his experiences at Joppa and Cæsarea, but only after Luke has given them at length in the tenth chapter.

[2] With possible Jewish-Christian implications.

[3] Cf. the revision of Peter's confession in Mt. 16:16 (contrast verse 13).

[4] Cf. above, page 131.

to discuss how far predecessors have anticipated his work, but the result is gained chiefly by regrouping paragraphs from the earlier tradition,[1] and the Evangelist's own revisions do not seem to be unusually extensive.

Somewhat to our surprise, however, we find between the lesson to the crowds and the transfiguration a single verse (9:1) that conveys a gracious promise; a verse, moreover, isolated from the context and introduced by the formula, "And he said unto them," although there is no change of speaker. We can scarcely miss the significance of this; the verse is a remnant of the original tradition, in which Peter's confession was received with gratitude and praise.[2] And, without attempting to fill up gaps in our sources by drawing on our imagination, we may at least suggest that we can conceive of Jesus as taking the disciples partly into his confidence at such a time.[3]

But our investigation of Mark's setting for Peter's confession has taught us something else of deep significance. The scene caused the Evangelist such pains that we may be sure he would have preferred to omit it altogether; for his

[1] *E. g.*, the prediction of the passion at this point is premature; contrast 9 : 10, 32.

[2] Perhaps obscure remains of the same tradition may underlie the promise to Peter in Mt. 16 : 17–19, especially if "against *thee*" be read in verse 18 in place of "against it"; cf. Mk. 9 : 1.

[3] Dibelius, indeed, feels shocked at such a suggestion (*Historical and Supra-Historical Religion*, page 76). But his insistence on Jesus' remoteness is one-sided.

purposes the transfiguration narrative would have been far better adapted to teach that Jesus' Messiahship was known to the disciples. Consequently the story of the confession must have been so firmly fixed in the tradition that Mark could not ignore it, and hence must be extremely early. But we can draw a further deduction. There never was or could have been a stage in apostolic history when the believers could have held Jesus to be simply the earthly Messiah; once the resurrection visions had been experienced they could think of him only as the glorious and exalted Son of Man.[1] But it was just this feature that Mark was forced to supply by his readjustments; in the original tradition Peter said only, "Thou art the Messiah," with no allusion to the Son of Man doctrine. And so we reach the last stage of our argument: the version of Peter's confession that stands in Mk. 8:28–29[2] could not have been framed in the apostolic church; the tradition must go back to Jesus' lifetime.

Out of the mass of corroborative evidence that may be adduced it must suffice to cite Di-

[1] If II Corinthians is really evidence of a Christological controversy between Paul and certain opponents, the differences concerned only the extent of this glorification and the deductions to be drawn from it. Paul's thesis was that Christ is so infinitely exalted as to be above all nationalistic limitations.

[2] Verse 30 should probably be included, but this verse certainly did not close the section; at least 9 : 1 followed. In any case, to interpret verse 30 as a *rejection* of the Messianic title is quite out of the question.

belius's argument;[1] this is of especial interest as coming from a scholar whose attitude toward the Synoptic tradition is more than cautious. Since Alexander and Rufus (Mk. 15:21) were evidently known to Mark's circle, an independent chain of eye-witness testimony connects the Evangelist with the crucifixion and guarantees the accuracy of his reproduction of the title on the Cross.[2] But the wording of the latter, "The King of the Jews," states the charge brought against Jesus, and—unless we are willing to believe that Pilate was totally negligent—this charge must have had some color of foundation; Jesus must, by word or act, have made a *personal* claim that could give at least a shadow of justification to his execution as a royal pretender.[3] And line after line of testimony—which we have by no means exhausted—converges in the same direction, while the counter-evidence is singularly unsatisfactory; it amounts to not very much more than the contention that we must distrust all Messianic passages because some of them are of ecclesiastical formation. And, as a matter of fact, scholars who entirely impugn Messianism for Jesus are very few; most of even the more sceptical are content, like Bultmann, with "possible but not proved." Accordingly the considerations we have presented,

[1] *Op. cit.*, pages 74 ff.

[2] It was noted above (page 21, foot-note) that Bousset's sceptical criticism of the title in the first edition of *Kyrios Christos* was withdrawn in the second edition.

[3] Dibelius, of course, adduces other arguments as well.

especially when viewed against the background of the Synoptic perspective as we have estimated it, justify us in feeling that hesitation is unwarranted: Jesus did hold himself to be Messiah.

Now let us ask how this conviction would affect his relations with his disciples. Ever since the eighteenth century (at least) we have had a succession of descriptions of Jesus in which history has been ignored. Writers seem to vie with one another in "humanizing" the picture, until we have inherited a conception perfectly expressed by the average illustrator of to-day; a figure that is mildness personified, below middle stature, with delicate features, hands and feet, the complete embodiment of the gentle dreamer. As has often been said, Renan's "Jesus" is simply the conventional ecclesiastical statue come to life, and Renan's Jesus holds surprising sway in many an "orthodox" environment. How such a figure could cleanse the Temple or pour withering denunciations on the Pharisees is an insoluble mystery, while that such a figure should proclaim impending doom is preposterous.

We must not, to be sure, be carried into the exaggerated position of Schweitzer and the Barthians. Human and even genial qualities were assuredly to be found in Jesus. He loved nature, flowers, and children. He was no ascetic, and found joy in eating and drinking. Women were devoted to him. With all his predictions of the coming judgment, he could and did promise

pardon on what seemed to his contemporaries disgracefully easy terms. When Dibelius denies[1] that there were any Rabbinic traits in Jesus' teaching, he flies in the face of the evidence; that Jesus was regularly called "Rabbi" is a basic element in the tradition.[2] All of these facts are very real, and they must be given their full weight.

But there is another and more important side to the picture. Fundamental to Jesus' work was his vocation to proclaim the coming kingdom; with a message of infinite blessedness, no doubt, but equally with a message of infinite destruction. "If thy right eye cause thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into Gehenna"; man is about to confront God.

He who is intrusted with such a message can never feel that he belongs to this world; a sense of separateness must be an integral part of his nature. Now add to this the Messianic consciousness. Too many moderns treat it as if it were something almost any religious man might possess, as if it were a normal outgrowth of a sunny piety. It was nothing of the sort. It meant that in the coming judgment Jesus felt he would not be on man's side but on God's.

Such a consciousness of necessity made Jesus

[1] *Op. cit.*, page 76.

[2] This conception could never have arisen after the resurrection.

look at mankind much as he looked at the world; as something to which he was in some way alien. Nor could this fail to influence his attitude toward his fellows and theirs toward him, so that his closest disciples must have experienced in him a sense of aloofness and of mystery. Dibelius has put it perfectly:[1] "If we search for a term that will express this unique relation between the disciples and the Master, we probably should not speak of a mystic bond—for we can detect no traces of the manifestations of mysticism—we should rather use the word 'numinous,' as Rudolf Otto does,[2] because here an apprehension of the Divine is dominant, which releases awe and self-surrender as in an act of worship." And he goes on to say that, whatever criticism may teach about Mk. 10:32, "And Jesus was going before them, and they were terrified, and they that followed were afraid," this verse expresses profoundly a fact of history. "Here an intuitive apprehension of the truth struggles to find expression; it attempts to make men realize the zone of silence that lay between the 'Holy One' and his disciples. . . . The movement that Jesus initiated had a *personal* significance, and discipleship had a *personal* emphasis. *Even in Jesus' lifetime the disciples were* personal *believers.*"[3]

All of this is profoundly true. And, when it is

[1] *Op. cit.*, page 77.

[2] *The Idea of the Holy.* Tr. by J. W. Harvey. Oxford Press, 1923. Dibelius refers particularly to pages 161 ff.

[3] Italics ours.

remembered, the so-called "mythical" sections in the tradition cease to be a problem. In so far as they picture a Divine Being walking in the midst of men, who partly pierce his imperfect disguise, these stories at the most simply heighten the impression that the Jesus of history actually produced. And that we are any the wiser by classifying such scenes as "epiphanies" or "myths" we may very much doubt; they merely use a terminology which myth-makers used as well. And there can be no suspicion of borrowing; in the most extreme instance, the transfiguration, the major motives are all palpably from the Old Testament, and beyond the Old Testament it is, for our purposes, profitless to trace them. Ultimately they may lose themselves in general Semitic mythology, but to know this is of no assistance in interpreting the Gospels.

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